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Christian Life
Sibbes, R. Bibliogr

I.

THE

BRUISED REED

AND SMOKING FLAX

II.

A FOUNTAIN SEALED

III.

A DESCRIPTION OF

CHRIST

BY

RICHARD SIBBES D. D.

LONDON
PICKERING
1838

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TO THE READER.

This republication of Dr. Sibbes's "Bruised Reed," and his "Soul's Conflict,"* is chiefly owing to the following notices of those Works by Izaak Walton. In his will he says, "To my son Izaak, I give *Doctor Sibbes* his *Soul's Conflict*, and to my daughter his *Bruised Reed;* desiring them to read them, so as to be well acquainted with them." Walton's esteem for Dr. Sibbes, was however more strongly shewn on another occasion. In a copy of that author's "Returning Backslider," 4to. 1640, which formerly belonged to Walton, and is now in Salisbury Cathedral Library, he has written,

> "Of this blest man, let this just praise be given,
> Heaven was in him, before he was in Heaven.
>
> IZAAK WALTON."

As it does not appear that Walton was acquainted with Dr. Sibbes, his admiration of that learned person probably arose from having been frequently one of his auditors while he was preacher at Gray's Inn, at which time Walton resided in Chancery Lane.

Dr. Sibbes' biographers have done little for his

* In the *Friendly Debate* (2nd part or continuation) 8vo. London, 1669, p. 219, there is an account of the Puritans having falsified some passages in the "Soul's Conflict."

memory; and the few facts which are known, are comprised in the following brief statement :— †

Richard Sibbes was born near Sudbury, in Suffolk, in the year 1577; and after receiving his education, probably at that place, was sent to Cambridge in 1595, in his 18th year. He was admitted of St. John's College, where his proficiency in learning was so uncommon, that he was soon promoted in his degrees, and was chosen Fellow of his College, in April, 1601, while the excellence of his character recommended him to all who knew him, and afforded a presage that he would prove an ornament to the University, and to the Church. It is said that he was "converted" through the ministry of Mr. Paul Baine, who was Lecturer of St. Andrew's Church, Cambridge.

Some time after Sibbes had taken his degree of Master of Arts, he entered into Holy Orders, was chosen Lecturer of Trinity Church, Cambridge, and was appointed to the vicarage of St. Mary's, on the resignation of Dr. Thomas Goodwin in his favour, about two years before the death of the latter. While Sibbes held that lectureship, his church was crowded both with students and townsmen; and he is said to have "soon become the happy instrument of bringing some souls to a knowledge of the truth, and encouraging others to hold on with perseverance against the obstacles which in those days were presented from all quarters."

† In the Public Library, Cambridge, in Baker's MS. Collections, Vol. 38—41, is an article entitled "Dr. Sibbs, his Life, by Mr. Zach. Catling." *Cole.*

About the year 1618, he was chosen preacher at Gray's Inn, "where his ministry found such general approbation and acceptance, that, besides the learned lawyers of the house, many persons of high rank, gentry and citizens, resorted to hear him; and many had reason to bless God for the benefit which they received by him." Dr. William Gouge, who frequently heard him preach, says, that "he sometimes had a little stammering in the time of his preaching; but then his judicious hearers always expected some rare and excellent notions from him."

It appears by a letter addressed to Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, from Usher, Archbishop of Armagh, that he was desirous Dr. Sibbes should be appointed Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, on the retirement of Sir William Temple, early in 1626:

"My most gracious Lord;

"When I took my last leave of you at Lambeth, I made bold to move your Grace, for the settlement of the Provostship of our College here, upon some worthy man, whensoever the place should next become void. I then recommended unto you Mr. Sibbes, the preacher of Grays-Inn; with whose learning, soundness of judgment, and uprightness of life, I was very well acquainted: And it pleased your Grace to listen unto my motion, and gave way to the coming over of the person named, when time required. The time (my Lord) is now come, wherein we have at last wrought Sir William Temple to give up his place, if the other may be drawn over. And therefore I most humbly intreat your Grace, to give unto Mr. Sibbes that en-

couragement he deserveth; on whose behalf I dare undertake, that he shall be as observant of you, and as careful to put in execution all your directions, as any man whosoever. The matter is of so great importance for the good of this poor Church, and your Fatherly Care, as well of the Church in general, as our College in particular so well known, that I shall not need to press you herein with many words. And therefore leaving it wholly to your Grace's grave consideration, and beseeching Almighty God to bless you in the managing of your weighty employments, I humbly take leave, and rest

"Your Grace's in all duty
"ready to be commanded,
Droghedah, "J. A."
January 10th, 1626.

Archbishop Usher wrote on the same subject to the Honourable Society of Lincolns-Inn:— *

"My most worthy friends;

"I cannot sufficiently express my thankfulness unto you for the honour which you have done unto me, in vouchsafing to admit me into your Society, and to make me a Member of your own Body. Yet so is it fallen out for the present, that I am enforced to discharge one piece of debt with entring into another.

* It is presumed that this is a mistake for *Gray's* Inn. There is no account of Sibbes having ever been preacher of *Lincoln's* Inn; and it is shewn by Archbishop Usher's own letter to Archbishop Abbot, which was written on the same day, that Sibbes was then preacher of *Gray's Inn*, and which is proved by many other circumstances. It is very unlikely that Sibbes should have been preacher at both Inns in the same year. An application to those Inns for information on the subject was not attended with any success.

For thus doth the case stand with us. Sir William Temple, who hath governed our College at Dublin these seventeen years, finding age and weakness now to encrease upon him, hath resolved to ease himself of that burthen, and resign the same to some other. Now of all others whom we could think of, your worthy preacher Mr. Sibbes is the man upon whom all our voices have been settled; as one that hath been well acquainted with an Academical Life, and singularly well qualified for the undertaking of such a place of Government. I am not ignorant, what damage you are to sustain by the loss of such an able man, with whose Ministry you have been so long acquainted: but I consider withal, that you are at the well-head, where the defect may quickly be supplied; and that it somewhat also tendeth to the honour of your Society, that out of all the King's Dominions, your House should be singled out, for the place unto which the Seminary of the whole Church in this Kingdom should have recourse for help and succour in this case. And therefore my most earnest suit unto you is, that you would give leave unto Mr. Sibbes to repair hither, at leastwise for a time, that he may see how the place will like him. For which great favour our whole Church shall be obliged unto you; and I, for my part, shall evermore profess myself to rest

"Your own in all Christian Service
"ready to be commanded,
"J. A."

Droghedah,
Jan. 10th, 1626.

In another letter, dated February 9th, 1626, from Archbishop Usher to Archbishop Abbot, he says:—

"I wrote unto your Grace heretofore concerning the substitution of Mr. Sibbes into the place of Sir William Temple; but having since considered with myself, how some occasions may fall out that may hinder him from coming hither, and how many most unfit persons are now putting in for that place, I have further emboldened myself to signify thus much more of my mind unto you, that in case Mr. Sibbes do not come unto us, I cannot think of a more worthy man, and more fit for the Government of that College, than Mr. Bedel, who hath heretofore remained with Sir Henry Wotton at Venice, and is now beneficed at Bury."

The following letter from Archbishop Abbot to Usher, tends to prove that Dr. Sibbes did accept the Provostship of Trinity College, and that he proceeded to Dublin to undertake its duties:

"My very good Lord,

"I send unto you Mr. Sibbes, who can best report what I have said unto him. I hope that College shall in him have a very good Master, which hitherto it hath not had. You shall make my excuse to the Fellows, that I write not unto them. You shall do well to pray to God that he will bless his Church; but be not too solicitous in that matter, which will fall of itself, God Almighty being able and ready to support his own cause. But of all things, take heed that you project no new ways; for if they fail, you shall bear a grievous burthen: if they prosper, there shall be no thanks to you. Be patient, and tarry the

Lord's leisure. And so commending me unto you, and to the rest of your Brethren, I leave you to the Almighty, and remain,

"Your Lordship's loving Brother,

Lambeth, "G. CANT."*

March 19th, 1626.

Sibbes did not, however, long retain, even if he ever actually held, the Provostship of Trinity College; for, on the death of Dr. Hills, in the same year, he was, by the recommendation of Archbishop Abbot, chosen Master of Katherine Hall, in the University of Cambridge,† which office he enjoyed during the remainder of his life; and he is recorded in the annals of that College, to have been one of its benefactors. To that mark of respect he seems amply entitled, as he interested himself in procuring subscriptions from persons of worth and opulence, for the enlargement of the buildings, and for the maintenance of men of learning and religion; so that he raised it from being a College of inferior note, to one of great reputation.

As to his general character in advanced life, it is said that "his learning was mixed with much humility; so that he was prone to undervalue those labours of his, which, in the opinion of others, breathed life and spirit, and spoke with authority and power to men's consciences. His care in the course of his ministry, was to lay a good foundation in the heads and hearts of his hearers;

* Vide Dr. Parr's Life of Archbishop Usher, fo. Lond. 1686, p. 374—380.

† Vide ibid. p. 380.

and though he was a wise master-builder, and that in one of the most eminent auditories for learning and piety, yet, according to the grace which was given to him (which was indeed like that of Elisha, a double portion), he was still taking all occasions to preach the fundamentals to them, and, among the rest, the incarnation of the Son of God: and preaching at several times, and from various texts, there is scarce any one of those incomparable benefits, which accrue to us thereby, nor any of those holy impressions, which the meditation hereof, ought to work in our hearts, which was not by him unfolded. The truth of this appeared so evident to an eminent divine, upon reading his sermons, when in print, that he said, 'I less wonder now at the noted humility of the author, finding how often his thoughts dwelt upon the humiliation of Christ.' Indeed he was thoroughly studied in the holy scriptures, which made him a man of God, *perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work:* and as became a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God, he endeavoured to teach it to others, and to store them with knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding."

"He was, upon all occasions, very charitable, drawing forth not only his purse in relieving, but his very bowels in commiserating the wants and necessities of the poor members of Christ's Church. He used sometimes, in the summer months, to go abroad to the houses of some worthy personages, where he was an instrument of much good; not only by his private labours, but by his prudent counsel and advice, that

upon every occasion he was ready to minister unto them: and thus having done his work on earth, he was received to heaven, peaceably and comfortably resigning up his spirit unto God in the year 1635, and in the 58th year of his age. He was as one taken from the evil to come; and although he met with some obstructions in his ministry, had but a faint glimpse of the desolations and confusion which the unhappy civil war brought upon church and state."

Dr. Sibbes died on Sunday, the 5th of July, 1635. He does not appear to have been married; and by his Will, dated on the day before his decease, and proved on the 11th of the same month, he left the residue of his property to his brother, Thomas Sibbes, of Thurston, in Suffolk, whom, with his nephew, John Sibbes, a student of Katherine Hall (son of his late brother, John Sibbes), and John Godbold, of Gray's Inn Square, he appointed his executors. The other relatives mentioned in his will were the children of his sister, Margaret Mason, and of his sisters Susan Hopham, and Elizabeth King, deceased; his uncle Sibbes; and his cousins, Jeremy Haske, Anne Beckett, and Elizabeth Beckett.

Richard Baxter in his autobiography speaking "of his own conversion, when he was about fifteen years of age," says, "And about that time it pleased God that a poor Pedlar came to the Door that had Ballads and some good Books: And my Father bought of him *Dr. Sibbes' Bruised Reed.* This also I read, and found it suited to my state, and seasonably sent me; which opened more the *love of God* to me, and

gave me a livelier apprehension of the Mystery of Redemption, and how much I was beholden to Jesus Christ." *

To the present edition of the "Bruised Reed" another work has been added, entitled, "A Fountain Sealed," and also three Sermons which were printed in his "Beams of Divine Light," "being the foregoing Sermons to that Treatise called the Bruised Reed, preached on the precedent words."

It has been thought desirable to conclude this brief Memoir with a list of the numerous works by Dr. Sibbes, the titles of which have not been hitherto correctly given; and although considerable pains have been taken to render it complete, some of his works have, nevertheless, probably escaped the compiler's notice.

* Life and Times by Sylvester, 1696. p. 4.

WORKS OF RICHARD SIBBES, D.D.

The following List will be found more copious and accurate than any yet extant. Besides the titles of the different Works it was necessary to notice also the Sermons contained therein, because portions have been inserted in Catalogues, as complete Works; and the contents of the same Work vary materially in different editions, as will be seen by reference to the Saint's Cordials:

1. *The Saints Cordials*, as they were delivered in sundry sermons upon speciall occassions, in the citie of London, and else-where. Published for the churches good. fo. Lond. 1629. p. 453, besides title and contents, 2 leaves.

1.	Art of Contentment	Phil. iv. 11, 12, 13.
2.	Discouragements Recoverie	Ps. xliii. 5.
3, 4.	Judgements Reason	1 Cor. xi. 30, 31, 32.
5.	Experience Triumphing, or the Saints Safetie	2 Tim. iv. 17, 18.
6, 7.	Matchless Love and In-being	John xvii. 26.
8.	The Tender Heart	2 Chron. xxxiv. 26.
9.	The Art of Humbling	2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.
10.	The Art of Mourning	2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.
11.	The Peace Gathering Privilege	2 Chron. xxxiv. 28.
12.	The Witness of Salvation	Rom. viii. 15, 16.
13.	The Pattern of Purity	1 John iii. 3.
14, 15.	Spiritual Mourning	Matt. v. 4.
16.	Knot of Prayer loosed	Matt. vii. 7—10.
17.	The Church's Blackness	Cant. i. 5, 6.
18.	The Vanitie of the Creature	2 Jam. xix. 34—38.
19.	The Right Receiving	1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.
20.	A Glimpse of Glory	2 Pet. i. 3.
21.	The General Resurrection	John xi. 23, 24.
22.	The Matchlesse Mercie	Micah vii. 18, 19, 20.
23.	The Poor Christian Doubting	John vi. 4, 5.
24.	The Touchstone of Regeneration	Isaiah xi. 6—9.
25.	Sinnes Antidote	Matt. xxvi. 28.
26.	The Discreet Plowman	Isaiah xxviii. 23, 24.
27, 28.	The Life of Faith	Galat. ii. 20.
29.	Salvation Applied	Galat. ii. 20.

*** Sermons 2 and 12 to 26, are not to be found in the later editions.

The Saints Cordials, delivered on sundry sermons at Graies Inn, and in the City of London, whereunto is now added, The Saints Safety in Evil Times, preached in Cambridge, upon special occasions, by R. Sibbes, D.D. late Master of Katherine Hall in Cambridge, and Preacher at Graies Inn, London. Folio, 1637, p. 395.

Sermons 3 and 4 of the first edition are entitled The Art of Self Judging.

Serm. 5 is the same sermon as that on 1 Tim. iv. 10, entitled Danger of Backsliding.

Serm. 6, 7, are called The Saint's Assurance.

Serm. 11 is called The Saint's Refreshing, or Saint's Assurance.

The nine following Sermons are not contained in the first edition.

Christ's Sufferings for Man's Sinne, Matt. xxvii. 46. Saint's Safety in Evil Times, 2 Sermons, Ps. vii. 14, and 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18. Christ is best, Phil. i. 23, 24, also separately published (see Art. III.)

Church's Visitation, 1 Pet. iv. 17—19. The Ungodlie's Miserie, ib. Also separately published (see Art. IV.)

Difficulty of Salvation, 1 Pet. iv. 18.

The Saint's Hiding Place, 1 Pet. iv. 19.

——————— 1 Pet. iv. 19.

Another edition, 1658, containing the same sermons; in which some verbal alterations appear to have been made.

II. The *Bruised Reed* and Smoking Flax; some Sermons contracted out of Matt. xii. 20, at the desire and for the good of weaker Christians. Third edit. p. 392, title, ded. &c. 27 leaves, table at end, 5 leaves, 12mo. Lond. 1631. Sixth edit. 12mo. Lond. 1638. Title and ded. 12 leaves, p. 267, and table, 4 leaves.

III. *The Saint's Safetie in Evil Times*, delivered at St. Marie's in Cambridge, the fifth of November, upon occasion of the Powder Plot. Whereunto is annexed a Passion Sermon, preached at Mercers' Chapel, London, upon Good Friday. As also the Happiness of enjoying Christ laid open at the funeral of Mr. Sherland, late recorder of Northampton, together with the vertuous life and heavenly end of that religious gentleman, (4 Sermons, entitled)

Saint's Safetie, &c..... Psalm vii. 14.

——————— ..... 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18.

Christ is Best; or St. Paul's Strait, Phil. i. 23, 24.

Christ's Sufferings for Man's Sinne, Matt. xxvii. 46.

12mo. Lond. 1633, p. 320. Another edit. 1634, new title

only. *** These Sermons are printed in the Saint's Cordials, fo. edit. 1637 and 1658.

IV. *The Churches Visitation*, discovering the many difficulties and tryalls of God's Saints on Earth. 12mo. Lond. 1634, pp. 96; consisting of Two Sermons, Church's Visitation and Ungodlie's Miserie, 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18, 19.

*** These Sermons were republished in the Saints Cordials, edit. 1637 and 1658.

V. *The Soules Conflict* with itselfe, and Victory over itselfe by Faith, &c. (On Ps. xlii.) 12mo. Lond. 1635, pp. 728, title, ded. and to the reader 13 leaves, besides table.

Second edit. 1635, pp. 572; tables and verses, &c. 11 leaves.

Fourth edit. Lond. 1651, 8vo. pp. 516, table 4 leaves, title, &c. 9 leaves.

Fifth edit. Lond. 1658; Ded. To the reader (signed, R. Sibbes), contents, verses by Benlowes and Quarles, 9 leaves, pp. 512, and table, 4 leaves.

VI. *Two Sermons* upon the first words of Christ's last Sermon, John xiv. 1, being also the last Sermons of R. Sibbes, D.D. preached to the Honourable Society of Grayes Inn, June 21 and 28, 1635, who the next Lord's day following died, and rested from all his labours, 4to. Lond. 1636, pp. 69, dedicated by Thos. Goodwin, and Phil. Nye.

*** These Sermons are printed at the end of the Fountain Sealed. Third edit. 1637, and fourth edit. 1638.

VII. *The Spirituall-Mans Aime*, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31; published by T. G. and P. N. 18mo. Lond. 1637, pp. 92, and table 4 leaves. Third edit. 1638. Another edition, Lond. 1656, 4to. appended to the Miracle of Miracles.

The *Christian's Portion*, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23; published by T. G. and P. N. 18mo. Lond. 1637, pp. 67.

Another edition, 1638, 12mo. and 1656, 4to.

VIII. *A Fountain Sealed:* or the duty of the Sealed to the Spirit, and the Work of the Spirit in Sealing, &c. the Substance of divers Sermons preached at Grayes Inn, 18mo. Lond. 1638. Text, Ephes. iv. 30, pp. 250, besides title and ded. 5 leaves, signed Tho. Goodwin Philip Nye.

Two Sermons upon the first Words of Christ's last Sermon, John xiv. 1, at Grays Inn, June 21 and 28, 1635, fourth edit. Lond. 1638.; 18mo. pp. 103, and the Author's prayer, title, &c. 6 leaves.

Another edition, entitled third, 1637.

IX. *Divine Meditations* and Holy Contemplations, 18mo. Lond. 1638. pp. 274.

Third edit. corrected, 12mo. Lond. 1658. pp. 141, and to the reader 5 leaves, signed Richard Culverwell.

x. *Light from Heaven:* discovering,
The Fountain Opened..... 1 Tim. iii. 16.
The Angels' Acclamations..... Luke ii. 13, 14.
The Churches Riches..... 2 Cor. viii. 9.
The Rich Povertie..... Zeph. iii. 12.
To the reader, signed A. Jackson, pp. 297 and 157, and table, 7 leaves, 4to. Lond. 1638.

xi. *The Riches of Mercie* in two Treatises
1. Lydia's Conversion ..... Acts xvi. 14.
2. A Rescue from Death..... Psa. cvii. 17.
18mo. Lond. 1638. pp. 108 and 146, and table 8 leaves, with his portrait.

xii. *Yea and Amen*:—Pretious Promises, and Priviledges spiritually unfolded in their nature and use, on 2 Cor. i. 19—23, 1 Rom. viii. 28; published by T. G. and P. N. 18mo. Lond. 1638. pp. 429, with his portrait by Marshall. Ætat. suæ 58.

xiii. *The Brides longing* for her Bride-grooms second coming, a Sermon preached at the funerall of Sir Thomas Crew, Knight (on Rev. xxii. 20). 18mo. Lond. 1638. Epistle signed G. H. pp. 138, Impr. Feb. 13, 1637, 1 leaf, title, epist. and contents, 11 leaves.

xiv. *A Glance of Heaven:* or a pretious Taste of a glorious feast (1 Cor. ii. 9,) 12mo. Lond. 1638. To the reader, signed L. Seaman, contains 4 Sermons; Sermon i—iii. pp. 211, and Sermon iv. pp. 58.

xv. The Saints Comforts. Being the substance of divers Sermons preached on Psalm cxxx. the beginning. (pp. 115, and title and contents of all the treatises, 6 leaves).
The Saints Happinesse, on Psalm lxxiii. xxviii. (pp. 71, and title).
The Rich Pearle; on Matth. xiii. xlv. xlvi. (pp. 35, and title).
The Successe of the Gospel, on Luke vii. xxxiv. xxxv. (pp. 45, and title).
Marie's Choyce, on Luke x. xxxviii. xxxix. xl. (pp. 56, and title). By a Reverend Divine now with God. Printed at London by Tho. Cotes, and are to be sold by Peter Cole, 1638.

The above are no doubt by Sibbes. His name is prefixed to the title of The Saints Happinesse, which is dated 1637, and to the titles of the three next Sermons, enumerated above.

xvi. Two Sermons, preached by that Faithfull and Reverend Divine, Richard Sibbes, D. D. and sometimes Preacher to the Honourable Society of Grayes Inne; and Master of Ka-

therine Hall in Cambridge. Printed at London by T. Cotes, for Andr. Kemble, 1639, 18mo. pp. 87, general title, ded. to Sir John Howland, knt. by R. T., and title to the first Sermon, 3 leaves. Serm. 1. "The Spouse her earnest desire after Christ her Husband, or, a Sermon preached on Cant. i. verse 1, at p. 55, The Power of Christ's Resurrection, on Colos. iii. 1."

XVII. *The Christian's End:* or the Sweet Sovereignty of Christ over his members in life and death. Wherein is contained the whole scope of the godly *Man's* life, with divers rules, motives and encouragements to live and die to Jesus Christ, 4to. Lond. 1639 (pp. 111), consisting of 5 Sermons on Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

XVIII. *The Returning Backslider:* or a commentary upon the whole XIV. Chapter of Hosea, 4to. London, 1639.

To the reader, signed I. H. 2 leaves, contents 4 leaves. pp. 482. 16 Sermons.

The Saint's Priviledge, or, a Christian's constant advocate, John, xvi. 8, 9, 10. 4to. Lond. 1638. Title, &c. 3 leaves, p. 489—511, and Table 8 leaves. Another edit. 12mo. 1638, pp. 47, port. by Marshall, title, &c. 5 leaves.

Second edit. Lond. 1641, title, &c. 6 leaves, pp. 484, and Tables 7 leaves, another edition, 1650.

XIX. *Beams of Divine Light:* breaking forth from several places of holy scripture, as they were learnedly opened. In XXI Sermons: the three first being the foregoing Sermons to that Treatise called The Bruised Reed, preached in the precedent words, &c. 4to. Lond. 1639. pp. 330 and 232, and tables, &c. 10 leaves, published by John Sedgwick and Arthur Jackson.

Serm. 1, 2, 3. Description of Christ ... Matt. xii. 18.
4, 5. God's Inquisition ..... Jerem. viii. 6, 7.
6. The Dead Man, &c. ...Ephes. ii. 1.
7, 8. The Fruitful Labour, &c. John vi. 27.
9, 10. Violence Victorious ... Matt. xi. 12.
11, 12, 13. The Churches Complaint and Confidence ..... Isai. lxiv. 6, 7, 8.
14, 15. The Spiritual Jubile ... Rom. viii. 2.
16. Saint Paul's Challenge, Rom. viii. 30.
17. The Churches Echo... Rev. xxii. 17.
18. David's Conclusion ... Ps. lxxiii. 28.
19, 20, 21. David's Epitaph. ..... Acts xiii. 36.

XX. *Christ's Exaltation:* purchast by humiliation. Wherein you may see Mercy and Misery meet together very useful.

I. For Instructing the Ignorant. II. For Comforting the Weake. III. For Confirming the Strong. Published by T. G. and P. N; 18mo. Lond. 1639: three Sermons on Rom. xiv. 9; title and contents 4 leaves, pp. 196.

XXI. *Bowels opened:* or a discovery of the Neere and deere love Union and Communion betwixt Christ and the Church, and consequently betwixt Him and every beleeving soule. Delivered in divers (i. e. XX.) Sermons in the 4th, 5th, 6th, Chapters of the Canticles. 4to. Lond. 1639; Dedication signed J. Goodwin, Phil. Nye, to the reader 1 leaf, signed I. Dod, contents 7 leaves, pp. 495, and table 12 leaves.
Other Editions 1641 and 1648.

XXII. *The Excellence of the Gospel:* above the Law, wherein the liberty of the sonnes of God is shewed with the image of their Graces here, and Glory hereafter (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18), 12mo. Lond. 1639, published by T. G. and P. N. Title, &c. 10 leaves, pp. 650.

XXIII. *The Spiritual Favorite* at the Throne of Grace, (on Nehem. i. 2.) 18mo. Lond. 1640, pp. 101.

XXIV. *A Breathing after God*, or a Christian's Desire of Gods Presence, (on Ps. xxvii. 4). 18mo. Lond. 1639, pp. 240, besides title, to the reader, signed H. I. 10 leaves.

XXV. *Evangelical Sacrifices*, in XIX Sermons, 4to. 1640; ded. 3 leaves, signed John Sedgwick, part i. pp. 318, part ii. pp. 238, and table 4 leaves, to the reader signed Arthur Jackson 2 leaves.

Beast's Dominion, &c.....	Rev. xvii. 7.
Ruin of Mystical Jericho	Heb. xi. 30.
Unprosperous Builder	Jos. vi. 10.
Successful Seeker, 2 Sermons.....	Ps. xxvii. 8.
Faith Triumphant, 5 Sermons....	Heb. xi. 15.
Hidden Life, 2 Funeral Sermons	Coloss. iii. 3, 4.
Redemption of Bodies.....	Phil. iii. 21.
Balaam's Wish.....	Numb. xxiii. 10.
Faithful Covenanter, 2 Sermons.....	Gen. xvii. 7.
Demand of a Good Conscience	1 Pet. iii. 21.
Sword of the Wicked, 2 Sermons ...	Ps. xlii. 10.

XXVI. *A Consolatory Letter* to an Afflicted Conscience; full of pious admonitions and divine instructions. Eccles. vi. 18. 4to. Lond. 1641, pp. 6, and title.

XXVII. *An Exposition of the Third Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*,—also,

Two Sermons of Christian Watchfulness:
1. The Christian's Watch, Luke xii. 37.
2. The coming of Christ, Rev. xvi. 15.

An Exposition of part of the Second Chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, (ii. 24, Providence of God,) A Sermon upon Malachi, iv. 2, 3.
4to. Lond. 1647. Title, &c. 6 leaves, p. 256, and 204.

XXVIII. *The Glorious Feast of the Gospel*, or Christ's gracious Invitation and royal Entertainment of Believers, delivered in divers Sermons upon Isaiah, Chap. xxv. 6, 7, 8, 9. 4to. Lond. 1650, title 1 leaf, to the reader, 4 leaves, analytical table 3 leaves, p. 146, wrongly numbered 156, alphabetical table, 3 leaves, signed Arthur Jackson, James Nalton, Will. Taylor.

XXIX. *A learned Commentary or Exposition* upon the *first Chapter* of the *Second Epist. of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, being the substance of many Sermons formerly preached at Grayes Inn, London, published T. Manton, fo. Lond. 1655, p. 451, title &c. 12 leaves. Portrait of Dr. Sibbes in the style of Hollar prefixed.

XXX. *Learned Commentary*, or *Exposition of the fourth Chap. of St. Paul* (2 Epist.) to the *Corinthians*, 4to. Lond. 1656, (to the reader, 3 leaves, p. 273,) to which is added,

A Heavenly Conference between Christ and Mary, after his Resurrection, John xx. 16. 4to. Lond. 1656; p. 106, and to the reader, 3 leaves, signed Simeon Ash, James Nalton, and Joseph Church.

Miracle of Miracles, or Christ in our nature, &c. 2 Sermons, Isaiah, vii. 14; 4to. Lond. 1656. p. 34.

*** The Miracle of Miracles, was printed separately, Lond. 1638. 4to. p. 27, and 27.

Spiritual Man's Aime, 1. Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. 4to. Lond. 1656. Published by T. G. and P. N. pages 35 to 66, and table to the three Sermons, 2 leaves. (See Art. VI.)

XXXI. *Antidotum Contra Naufragium Fidei et Bonæ conscientiæ*—Concio latinè habila ad Academicos Cantabrig. in Ecclesia S. Mariæ, 9 die Octobris, 1627, Authore Rich. Sibbes, SS th. D. D. et Aulæ Catharinæ Praeside. 18mo. *Lond.* 1657. p. 78. title and dedication 2 leaves, signed, N. W. G.

XXXII. The works of the Reverend Richard Sibbs, D. D. late Master of Catharine Hall, in the University of Oxford, [Cambridge,] and preacher of Grays Inn, London, &c. in 3 vols. 8vo. Aberdeen, 1812.

This Edition, which purports to be the entire works of Sibbes, contains only a small portion, namely, Arts. II, V, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XIX, and XXI—besides being incorrectly printed, and omitting the prefaces, dedications, and tables.

Sibbes and Norton published Preston's Saints Portion or the New Covenant, in XIV sermons, Lond. 1629, 4to.

Sibbes and Davenport published Preston's Breast Plate of Faith and Love, in XVIII sermons, Lond. 1630, 4to.

Sibbes and Davenport published Preston's Saint's Qualification, in XXII sermons, 4to. Lond. 1633.

Capel on Temptations, their Nature, Cure, and Danger, 18mo. Lond. 1636, has a preface by Sibbes.

Ball (John) Treatise of Faith, 3rd edit. 4to. Lond. 1637, has a preface by Sibbes.

House of Mourning Furnished, LVI Funeral Sermons by Featly, Taylor, Sibbes, Fuller, &c. folio, Lond. 1672.

THE
BRUISED REED AND SMOKING FLAX.

Who hath despised the day of small things?
ZECH. IV. 10.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR HORATIO VERE, KNT.

LORD VERE OF TILBURY, AND GENERAL OF THE ENGLISH FORCES UNDER THE HIGH AND MIGHTY LORDS THE STATES GENERAL OF THE UNITED PROVINCES IN THE NETHERLANDS;

AND TO HIS PIOUS CONSORT,

THE LADY MARY VERE,

INCREASE OF GRACE, ETC.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

SOLDIERS that carry their lives in their hands had need above all others to carry grace in their hearts, that so having made peace with God, they may be fit to encounter with men. And having by faith in Christ disarmed death before they die, they may sacrifice their lives with the more courage and comfort: which to neglect, being a matter of eternity, is not valour, but desperate madness, because in this business, as in oversights of war, there is no place for a second repentance, the first error being unrecoverable. In evils above the strength of man to prevail against, and his patience to endure, there God hath planted the affection of fear, which might stir us up to avoid the danger by flying to him in Christ, who being our friend, it is no matter who is our enemy: we may be killed, but cannot be hurt; so safe it is to be under his command, that hath command over death, hell, judgment, and all that we most fear.

Yet such is our nature, that by familiarity with danger, we grow by degrees insensibly to be hardened against it, and to look no further than death, as if to die were only to give up the ghost, and then an end of all. And hereupon it is, that they that follow the wars are generally taken to be men not most religious; the more respect those of that profession deserve, that have learned upon what terms to live and die, that are sure of a better life before they leave *this*, that have laid up their life in Christ; amongst whom, Right Honourable, the world hath a long time taken notice of you, in whom both religion and military employment, meekness of spirit with height of courage, humility with honour, by a rare and happy combination, have met together. Whereby you have much vindicated your profession from common imputation, and shewed that piety can enter into tents, and follow after camps, and that God hath his Joshuas and his Corneliuses in all ages. But I will not use many words of yourself to yourself, because though you have done much that may and will be spoken, yet you love not to hear or speak of what you have done.

It may seem to some unbefitting to offer a discourse of a bruised Reed to such a strong and flourishing cedar. But experience sheweth that the strongest plants in God's house are exposed sometimes to strong winds of temptation, and thereupon meet with bruisings, that they may the better know by whose strength they stand, and that the greatest may learn to go out of themselves to the same common rock and fountain

of strength with the meanest. David was a valiant man; yet upon experience of his oft failings and recoveries, he became towards God as a weaned child. Lowliness of mind to Godward and greatness of spirit against his enemies may well stand together; for the way to be above all other things is to submit to God first. Besides, this text speaketh of the prevailing government of Christ in his Church and in his children, which may be an encouragement to your Lordship still, not only to own the cause of Christ in these times, wherein men are ashamed of what they should glory in, and glory in their shame; but likewise to fight the Lord's battles, when called to it, and help him against the mighty, for victory attendeth Christ's side in the end. Though God, to revenge the quarrel of his covenant, suffer his enemies to prevail yet for a time to harden them the more, yet they have undertaken a damned cause. And howsoever the Church hath justly provoked God, yet the cause shall stand impregnable against all created power of devils and men. We naturally desire victory, and many desire it more than truth or goodness, which only are victorious; and so out of a depraved judgment they cross their own desires, seeking to overcome in that wherein it were safer for them to be overcome. These are sure to meet with shame in the conclusion instead of victory; or else we must deny Christ to be King of his Church, and Judge of the world. Proceed on still, Honourable Lord, to stand for Christ both in peace and war, and this shall be found to your honour,

when Christ shall come to be glorious in his saints, that he thought you worthy to honour himself by, when others that oppose or betray the cause of Christ for base ends shall not dare to hold up their heads.

I would not divide you from your Honourable Lady, being obliged to both, and both being one, as in other bands, so in that above nature, in love to the best things; both exemplary in all religious courses, both in your places likewise having been employed in great services for the common good, so that not only this but foreign states are bound to bless God for you both. Going on in these ways, you will find God making his promise good, of honouring them that honour him.

I do not so far overvalue this poor work as to think it worthy of your Honours, but thus I thought meet to witness my deserved respect to you both. If I be to blame for suffering these Sermons, long since preached, thus to come forth, others must divide the fault with me, who had brought it to that pass, that it was almost necessary for me to take this course. The Lord continue to bless your Honours with all your branches, and to maintain his grace in you, until he hath brought forth judgment unto victory.

Your Honours' to command in the Lord,

Richard Sibbes.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

TO prevent a further inconvenience, I was drawn to let these notes pass with some review, considering there was an intendment of publishing them, by some who had not perfectly taken them; and these first, as being next at hand: and having had occasion lately of some fresh thoughts concerning this argument by dealing with some, the chief ground of whose trouble was the want of considering of the gracious nature and office of Christ; the right conceit of which is the spring of all service to Christ, and comfort from him. God hath laid up all grace and comfort in Christ for us, and planted a wonderful sweetness of pity and love in his heart towards us. As God his father hath *fitted him with a body*, so with a heart to be a merciful Redeemer. What do the Scriptures speak but Christ's love and tender care over those that are humbled: and besides the mercy that resteth in his own breast, he works the like impression in his ministers and others, *to comfort the feeble-minded, and to bear with the weak*. Ministers by their calling are friends of the bride, and to bring Christ and his spouse together, and therefore ought, upon all good occasions, to lay open all the excellencies of Christ, and amongst others, as that he is highly born,

mighty, one in whom all the treasures of wisdom are hid, &c. so likewise gentle, and of a good nature, and of a gracious disposition. It cannot but cheer the heart of the spouse, to consider in all her infirmities and miseries she is subject to, that she hath a husband of a kind disposition, that knows how to give the honour of mild usage to the weaker vessel, that will be so far from rejecting her, because she is weak, that he will pity her the more. And as he is kind at all times, so especially when it is most seasonable, he will speak to her heart, *especially in the wilderness*. The more glory to God, and the more comfort to a Christian soul, ariseth from the belief and application of these things; the more the enemy of God's glory and man's comfort labours to breed mispersuasions of them, that if he cannot keep men from Heaven, and bring them into that cursed condition he is in himself, yet he may trouble them in their passage; some and none of the worst, Satan prevails withal so far as to neglect the means, upon fear they should, being so sinful, dishonour God and increase their sins: and so they lie smothering under this temptation as it were bound hand and foot by Satan, not daring to make out to Christ, and yet are secretly upheld by a spirit of faith, shewing itself in hidden sighs and groans unto God: these are abused by false representations of Christ; all whose ways to such being ways of mercy, and all his thoughts, thoughts of love: the more Satan is malicious in keeping the soul in darkness, the more care is to be had of establishing the soul upon that which will stay

it, *Rev.* xxii. 17. Amongst other grounds to build our faith on as the free offer of grace to all that will receive it; the gracious invitation of all that are weary and heavy laden, *Matt.* xi. 28; those that have nothing to buy withal, *Isai.* lv. 1; the command binding to believe, 1 *John* iii. 13; the danger of not believing, being shut up prisoners thereby under the guilt of all other sins, *John* xvi. 9; the sweet entreaty to believe, and ordaining ambassadors to desire peace, 2 *Cor.* v. 20; putting tender affections into them answerable to their calling, ordaining sacraments for the sealing of the covenant; besides these, I say, and such moving inducements, this is one infusing vigour and strength into all the rest that they proceed from Christ, a person authorized, and from those bowels that moved him not only to become a man, but a curse for us; hence it is, *that he will not quench the smoking wick or flax.* It adds strength to faith to consider, that all expressions of love issue from nature in Christ, which is constant. God knows that as we are prone to sin, so when conscience is thoroughly awaked, we are as prone to despair for sin; and therefore he would have us know, that he setteth himself in the covenant of grace to triumph in Christ over the greatest evils and enemies we fear, and that his thoughts are not as our thoughts are, *Isai.* v. 8; that he is God and not man, *Hos.* xi. 9; that there are heights, and depths, and breadths of mercy in him above all the depths of our sin and misery, *Eph.* iii. 18; that we should never be in such a forlorn condition, wherein there should be ground

of despair, considering our sins be the sins of men, his mercy the mercy of an infinite God. But though it be a truth clearer than the sunbeams, that a broken-hearted sinner ought to embrace mercy so strongly enforced: yet there is no truth that the heart shutteth itself more against than this; especially in sense of misery, when the soul is fittest for mercy, until the Holy Spirit sprinkleth the conscience with the blood of Christ, and sheddeth his love into the heart, that so the blood of Christ in the conscience may cry louder than the guilt of sin; for only God's spirit can raise the conscience with comfort above guilt, because he is only greater than the conscience. Men may speak comfort, but it is Christ's spirit that can only comfort. Peace is the fruit of the lips, but yet created to be so. No creature can take off wrath from the conscience, but he that set it on, though all the prevailing arguments be used that can be brought forth, till the Holy Ghost effectually persuadeth, by a divine kind of rhetoric, which ought to raise up our hearts to him who is the comforter of his people, that he would seal them to our souls. Now God dealing with men as understanding creatures, the manner which he useth in this powerful work upon their consciences, is, by way of friendly intercourse, as entreaty and persuasion, and discovery of his love in Christ, and Christ's gracious inclination thus even to the weakest and lowest of men. And therefore because he is pleased by such like motives to enter into the heart and settle a peace there, we ought with reverence to regard all such sanctified helps, and among

the rest this of making use of this comfortable description of Christ by God the father, in going boldly in all necessities to the throne of grace. But we must know this comfort is only the portion of those that give up themselves to Christ's government, that are willing in all things to be disposed of by him. For here we see in this Scripture both joined together, mercy to bruised reeds, and yet government prevailing by degrees over corruptions. Christ so favoureth weak ones, as that he frameth their souls to a better condition than they are in. Neither can it be otherwise, but that a soul looking for mercy should submit itself at the same time to be guided. Those relations of husband, head, shepherd, &c. imply not only meekness and mercy, but government likewise. When we become Christians to purpose, we live not exempt from all service, but only we change our Lord. Therefore if any in an ill course of life snatch comforts before they are reached out unto them, let them know they do it at their own perils. It is as if some ignorant man should come into an apothecary's shop, stored with variety of medicines of all sorts, and should take what comes next to hand, poison perhaps instead of physic. There is no word of comfort in the whole book of God intended for such *as regard iniquity in their hearts*, Psalm lxvi. 18; though they do not act it in their lives. Their only comfort is, that the sentence of damnation is not executed, and thereupon there is yet opportunity of safer thoughts and resolutions, otherwise they stand not only convicted but condemned by the word; and Christ *that rideth on*

the white horse, Rev. vi. 2, will spend all his arrows upon them, and wound them to death. If any shall bless himself in an ill way, God's wrath shall burn to hell against such: there is no more comfort to be expected from Christ, than there is care to please him. Otherwise to make him an abettor of a lawless and loose life, is to transform him into a fancy, nay, into the likeness of him whose works he came to destroy,, which is the most detestable idolatry of all. One way whereby the spirit of Christ prevaileth in his, is to preserve them from such thoughts; yet we see people will frame a divinity to themselves, pleasing to the flesh, suitable to their own ends, which, being vain in the substance, will prove likewise vain in the fruit, and as a building upon the sand.

The main scope of all is to allure us to the entertainment of Christ's mild, safe, wise, victorious government, and to leave men naked of all pretences, why they will not have Christ to rule over them, when we see salvation not only strongly wrought, but sweetly dispensed by him. His government is not for his own pleasure, but for our good. We are saved by a way of love, that love might be kindled by this way in us to God again; because this affection melteth the soul, and mouldeth it to all duty and acceptable manner of performance of duty. It is love in duties that God regards more than duties themselves. This is the true and evangelical disposition arising from Christ's love to us, and our love to him again; and not to fear to come to him, as if we were to take an elephant by the tooth. It is almost a fun-

damental mistake to think, that God delights in slavish fears, when as the fruits of Christ's kingdom are peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; for from this mistake come weak, slavish, superstitious conceits.

Two things trouble the peace of Christians very much; their weaknesses hanging upon them; and fear of holding out for time to come. A remedy against both is in this text, for Christ is set out here as a mild Saviour to weak ones; and for time to come, his powerful care and love is never interrupted, until he bring forth judgment to victory. And thereupon it is that both the means of salvation and grace wrought by means, and glory the perfection of grace, come all under one name of the KINGDOM OF GOD so oft; because whom by means he brings to grace, he will by grace bring to glory.

This makes the thoughts of the latter judgment comfortable unto us, that he who is then to be our judge, cannot but judge for them who have been ruled by him here; for whom he guides by his counsel, those he brings to glory. If our faith were but as firm as our state in Christ is secure and glorious, what manner of men should we be?

If I had gone about to affect writing in a high strain, I should have missed of mine end, and crossed the argument in hand. For shall we that are servants quench those weak sparks which our Lord himself is pleased to cherish? I had rather hazard the censure of some, than hinder the good of others; which, if it be any ways furthered by these few observations, I have what I aimed at. I intended not a

treatise, but opening of a text; what I shall be drawn to do in this kind must be by degrees, as leisure in the midst of many interruptions will permit: the Lord guide our hearts, tongues, and pens for his glory and the good of his people.

RICHARD SIBBES.

THE BRUISED REED AND SMOKING FLAX.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.
MATT. XII. 20.

CHAPTER I.

The Text opened and divided. What the Reed is, and what the bruising.

THE prophet Isaiah being lifted up, and carried with the wing of prophetical spirit, passeth over all the time between him and the appearing of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and seeth with the eye of prophecy, and with the eye of faith, Christ as present, and presenteth him in the name of God to the spiritual eye of others, in these words, *Behold my servant whom I have chosen*, &c. Which place is alleged by Saint Matthew as fulfilled now in Christ. Wherein is propounded,

First, the calling of Christ to his office.

Secondly, the execution of it.

For his calling: God styleth him here his *righteous servant*, &c. Christ was God's servant in the greatest piece of service that ever was; a chosen and a choice servant: he did and suffered all by commission from the Father: wherein we may see the sweet love of God to us, that counts the work of our salvation by

Christ his greatest service. And that he will put his only beloved Son to that service. He might well prefix [*Behold*] to raise up our thoughts to the highest pitch of attention and admiration. In time of temptation, misgiving consciences look so much to the present trouble they are in, that they need be roused up to behold Him in whom they may find rest for their distressed souls. In temptations it is safest to behold nothing but Christ the true *brazen Serpent, the true Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*, John i. 29. This saving object hath a special influence of comfort into the soul, especially if we look not only on Christ, but upon the Father's authority and love in him. For in all that Christ did and suffered as Mediator, we must see *God in him reconciling the world unto himself*, 2 Cor. v. 19.

What a support to our faith is this, that God the Father, the party offended by our sins, is so *well pleased* with the work of redemption? And what a comfort is this, that seeing God's love resteth on Christ, as well pleased in him, we may gather that he is as well pleased with us, if we be in Christ? For his love resteth in *whole* Christ, in Christ mystical, as well as Christ natural, because he loveth him and us with one love. Let us therefore embrace Christ, and in him God's love, and build our faith safely on such a Saviour, that is furnished with so high a commission.

See here, for our comfort, a sweet agreement of all three persons: the Father giveth a commission to Christ; the Spirit furnisheth and sanctifieth to it; Christ himself executeth the office of a Mediator. Our redemption is founded upon the joint agreement of all three persons of the Trinity.

For the execution of this his calling, it is set down here to be modest, without making a noise, or raising dust by any pompous coming, as princes use to do: [*his voice shall not be heard*] his voice indeed was heard, but what voice? *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden*, Mat. xi. 28, he cried, but how? *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come*, &c. Isa. lv. 1. And as his coming was modest, so it was mild, which is set down in these words, *The bruised reed shall he not break:* wherein we may observe these three things:

First, the condition of those that Christ had to deal withal: 1. They were *bruised reeds*. 2. *Smoking flax*.

Secondly, Christ's carriage toward them, he *brake not* the bruised reed, nor *quenched* the smoking flax: where more is meant than spoken; for he will not only not break the bruised reed, nor quench, &c. but he will cherish them.

Thirdly, the constancy and progress of this his tender care, *until judgment come to victory*, that is, until the sanctified frame of grace begun in their hearts be brought to that perfection, that it prevaileth over all opposite corruption.

For the first, the condition of men whom he was to deal withal is, that they were *bruised reeds*, and *smoking flax;* not *trees*, but *reeds;* and not *whole*, but *bruised* reeds. The Church is compared to weak things; to a *dove* amongst the fowls; to a *vine* amongst the plants; to *sheep* amongst the beasts; to a *woman*, which is the *weaker vessel:* and here God's children are compared to *bruised reeds* and *smoking flax*. First, we will speak of them as they are bruised reeds, and then as smoking flax.

They are bruised reeds before their conversion, and oftentimes after: before conversion all (except such as being bred up in the Church, God hath delighted to shew himself gracious unto from their childhood) yet in different degrees, as God seeth meet; and as difference is in regard of temper, parts, manner of life, &c. so in God's intendment of employment for the time to come: for usually he empties such of themselves, and makes them nothing, before he will use them in any great services.

This bruised reed is a man, that for the most part is in some misery, as those were, that came to Christ for help, and by misery is brought to see sin the cause of it; for whatsoever pretences sin maketh, yet bruising or breaking is the end of it: he is sensible of sin and misery, even unto bruising: and seeing no help in himself, is carried with restless desire to have supply from another, with some hope, which a little raiseth him out of himself to Christ; though he dareth not claim any present interest of mercy. This spark of hope being opposed by doubtings, and fears rising from corruption, maketh him as smoking flax; so that both these together, *a bruised reed*, and *smoking flax*, make up the state of a poor distressed man; such a one as our Saviour Christ termeth *poor in spirit*, Mat. v. 3, who seeth a want, and withal seeth himself indebted to Divine Justice, and no means of supply from himself or the creature, and thereupon mourns, and upon some hope of mercy from the promise, and examples of those that have obtained mercy, is stirred up to hunger and thirst after it.

CHAP. II.

Those that Christ hath to do withal are bruised.

THIS bruising is required before conversion, that so the Spirit may make way for itself into the heart, by *levelling all proud high thoughts*, and that we may understand ourselves to be what indeed we are by nature. We love to wander from ourselves, and to be strangers at home, till God bruiseth us by one cross or other, and then we *bethink ourselves, and come home to ourselves with the prodigal*, Luke xv. 17.

A marvellous hard thing it is to bring a dull and a shifting heart to cry with feeling for mercy. Our hearts, like malefactors, until they be beaten from all shifts, never cry for the mercy of the Judge. Again, this bruising maketh us set a high price upon Christ; the gospel is the gospel indeed then, then the fig-leaves of morality will do us no good; and it maketh us more thankful, and from thankfulness more fruitful in our lives; for what maketh many so cold and barren, but that bruising for sin never endeared God's grace unto them? Likewise this dealing of God doth establish us the more in his ways, having had knocks and bruisings in our own ways. This is the cause oft of relapses and apostasies, because men never smarted for sin at the first, they were not long enough under the lash of the law. Hence this inferior work of the Spirit, in *bringing down high thoughts*, is necessary before conversion. And for the most part, the Holy Spirit, to further the work of conviction, joineth some affliction, which sanctified, hath a healing and purging power.

Nay, after conversion we need bruising. That reeds may know themselves to be reeds, and not oaks; even reeds need bruising by reason of the remainder of pride in our nature, and to let us see that we live by mercy. And that weaker Christians may not be too much discouraged, when they see stronger shaken and bruised. Thus Peter was bruised when he *wept bitterly*. This reed, till he met with this bruise, had more wind in him than pith. *Though all forsake thee, I will not*, &c. Matt. xxvi. 35. The people of God cannot be without these examples. The heroical deeds of those great worthies do not comfort the church so much, as their falls and bruises do, *Psalm* xxxii. 3, 4, 5. Thus David was bruised, until he came to a free confession without *guile* of spirit: nay, his sorrows did rise in his own feeling, unto the exquisite pain of *breaking of bones*, Psalm li. 8. Thus Hezekiah complains, that God had *broken his bones as a lion*, Isai. xxxviii. 13. Thus the chosen vessel St. Paul, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, needed the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be lifted up above measure.

Hence we learn, that we must not pass too harsh judgment upon ourselves, or others, when God doth exercise us with bruising upon bruising; there must be a conformity to our head Christ, who *was bruised for us*, Isai. liii. 5, that we may know how much we are bound unto him. Profane spirits, ignorant of God's ways in bringing his children to heaven, censure broken-hearted Christians for desperate persons, when as God is about a gracious good work with them. It is no easy matter to bring a man from nature to grace, and from grace to glory; so unyielding and untractable are our hearts.

CHAP. III.

Christ will not break the bruised Reed.

THE second point is, *That Christ will not break the bruised reed.* Physicians, though they put their patients to much pain, yet they will not destroy nature, but raise it up by degrees. Chirurgeons will lance and cut, but not dismember. A mother that hath a sick and froward child will not therefore cast it away; and shall there be more mercy in the stream than in the spring? shall we think there is more mercy in ourselves than in God, who planteth the affection of mercy in us? But for further declaration of Christ's mercy to all bruised reeds, consider the comfortable relations he hath taken upon him of husband, shepherd, brother, &c. which he will discharge to the utmost; for shall others by his grace fulfil what he calleth them unto, and not he that, out of his love, hath taken upon him these relations, so thoroughly founded upon his Father's assignment, and his own voluntary undertaking? Consider his borrowed names from the mildest creatures, as lamb, hen, &c. to shew his tender care: consider his very name, Jesus, a *Saviour*, given him by God himself: consider his office answerable to his name; which is, that he should *heal the broken-hearted*, Isai. lxi. 1. At his baptism the Holy Ghost sat on him in the shape of a *dove*, to shew that he should be a dove-like gentle mediator. See the gracious manner of executing his offices; as a *prophet*, he came with blessing in his mouth, *Blessed be the poor in spirit*, &c. Matt. v, and invited those to come to him, whose hearts suggested most exceptions against themselves, *Come unto*

me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, Matt. xi. 28. How did his bowels yearn, when *he saw the people as sheep without a shepherd*, Matt. ix. 36. He never turned any back again that came unto him, though some went away of themselves. He came to die as a priest for his enemies: in the days of his flesh he dictated a form of prayer unto his disciples, and put petitions unto God into their mouths, and his spirit to intercede in their hearts; and now makes intercession in heaven for weak Christians, standing between God's anger and them; and shed tears for those that shed his blood: so he is *a meek king*, he will admit mourners into his presence, a king of poor and afflicted persons: as he hath beams of majesty, so he hath bowels of mercies and compassion; *a prince of peace*, Isai. ix. 6. Why was he *tempted*, but *that he might succour those that are tempted*, Heb. ii. 18. What mercy may we not expect from so gracious a *mediator*, 1 *Tim.* ii. 5, that took our nature upon him that he might be gracious. He is a physician good at all diseases, especially at the binding up of a broken heart: he died that he might heal our souls with a plaster of his own blood, and by that death save us, which we were the procurers of ourselves, by our own sins; and hath he not the same bowels in heaven? *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Acts ix. 4, cried the head in heaven, when the foot was trodden on earth. His advancement hath not made him forget his own flesh: though it has freed him from *passion*, yet not from *compassion* towards us. The lion of the tribe of Judah will only tear in pieces those that *will not have him rule over them*, Luke xix. 17. He will not show his strength against those that prostrate themselves before him.

What should we learn from hence, but *to come boldly to the throne of grace* in all our grievances? Shall our sins discourage us, when he appears there only for sinners? Art thou bruised? Be of good comfort, he calleth thee; conceal not thy wounds, open all before him, keep not Satan's counsel. Go to Christ though trembling; as the poor woman, if we can but *touch the hem of his garment*, Matt. ix. 20, we shall be healed and have a gracious answer: *Go boldly to God* in our flesh; for this end that we might go boldly to him, he is *flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone*. Never fear to go to God, since we have such a mediator with him, that is not only our friend, but our brother and husband. Well might the angels proclaim from heaven, *Behold, we bring you tidings of joy*, Luke ii. 10: well might the apostle stir us up to *rejoice in the Lord again and again*, Phil. iv. 4: he was well advised upon what grounds he did it: peace and joy are two main fruits of his kingdom. Let the world be as it will, if we cannot rejoice in the world, yet we may rejoice in the Lord. His presence maketh any condition comfortable. *Be not afraid*, saith he to his disciples, when they were afraid as if they had seen a ghost, *it is I*, Matt. xiv. 27; as if there were no cause of fear where he is present.

Let this stay us when we feel ourselves bruised; Christ his course is first to wound, then to heal; no sound whole soul shall ever enter into heaven. Think in temptation, Christ was tempted for me; according to my trials will be my graces and comforts. If Christ be so merciful as not to break me, I will not break myself by despair, nor yield myself over to the roaring lion Satan to break me in pieces.

Thirdly, see the contrary disposition of Christ, and Satan, and his instruments. Satan setteth upon us when we are weakest, as Simeon and Levi upon the *Shechemites, when they were sore*, Gen. xxxiv. 25: but Christ will make up in us all the breaches sin and Satan have made: he *binds up the broken-hearted*. And as a mother tendereth most the most diseased and weakest child, so doth Christ most mercifully incline to the weakest; and likewise putteth an instinct into the weakest things to rely upon something stronger than themselves for support. The vine stayeth itself upon the elm; and the weakest creatures have oft the strongest shelters. The consciousness of the Church's weakness makes her willing to lean on her Beloved, and to hide herself under his wing.

CHAP. IV.

Signs of one truly bruised. Means and measure of bruising: and comfort to such.

BUT how shall we know, whether we are such as those that may expect mercy?

By *bruising* here is not meant those that are brought low only by crosses, but such as by them are brought to see their sin, which bruiseth most of all. When conscience is under the guilt of sin, then every judgment brings a report of God's anger to the soul, and all less troubles run into this great trouble of conscience for sin. As all corrupt humours run to the diseased and bruised part of the body; and as every creditor falls upon the debtor, when he is once arrested; so when conscience is once awaked, all former sins and present crosses join together to make the bruise

the more painful: now he that is thus bruised will be content with nothing but with mercy from him that hath bruised him, *He hath wounded, and he must heal.* Lord, thou hast bruised me deservedly for my sins, bind up my heart again, &c. 2. Again, a man truly bruised, judgeth sin the greatest evil, and the favour of God the greatest good. 3. He had rather hear of mercy than of a kingdom. 4. He hath mean conceits of himself, and thinketh he is not worth the earth he treads on. 5. Towards others he is not censorious, as being taken up at home, but is full of sympathy and compassion to those that are under God's hand. 6. He thinketh those that walk in the comforts of God's spirit the happiest men of the world. 7. He *trembleth at the word of God*, Isa. lxvi. 2, and honoureth the very *feet of those* blessed instruments *that bring peace* unto him, *Rom.* x. 15. 8. He is more taken up with the inward exercises of a broken heart, than with formality, and yet careful to use all sanctified means to convey comfort.

But how shall we come to have this temper?

First, we must conceive of bruising either as a state into which God bringeth us, or as a duty to be performed by us: both are here meant; we must join with God in bruising of ourselves; when he humbles us, let us humble ourselves, and not stand out against him, for then he will redouble his strokes; and let us justify Christ in all his chastisements, knowing that all his dealing towards us is to cause us to return into our own hearts; his work in bruising tendeth to our work in bruising ourselves. Let us lament our own untowardness, and say, Lord, what a heart have I that needs all this, that none of this could be spared? we must lay siege to the hardness of our own hearts,

and aggravate sin all we can: we must look on Christ, who was bruised for us, look on him whom we have pierced with our sins. But all directions will not prevail, unless God by his Spirit convinceth us deeply, setting our sins before us; and driving us to a stand. Then we will make out for mercy. Conviction will breed contrition, and this, humiliation. Therefore desire God, that he would bring a clear and a strong light into all the corners of our souls, and accompany it with a spirit of power to lay our hearts low.

A set measure of bruising ourselves cannot be prescribed; yet it must be so far, as 1. we may prize Christ above all, and see that a Saviour must be had: and 2. until we reform that which is amiss, though it be to the cutting off our right hand, or pulling out our right eye. There is a dangerous slighting of the work of humiliation; some alleging this for a pretence for their overly dealing with their own hearts, that Christ will not break the bruised reed; but such must know that every sudden terror and short grief is not that which makes us bruised reeds; not a *little hanging down our heads like a bulrush*, Isai. lviii. 5, but a working our hearts to such a grief, as will make sin more odious unto us than punishment; until we offer a holy violence against it: else favouring ourselves, we make work for God to bruise us, and for sharp repentance afterwards. It is dangerous, I confess, in some cases with some spirits, to press too much and too long this bruising; because they may die under the wound and burthen before they be raised up again. Therefore it is good in mixed assemblies to mingle comfort, that every soul may have its due portion. But if we lay this for a ground, that there is more

mercy in Christ, than sin in us, there can be no danger in thorough-dealing. It is better to go bruised to heaven than sound to hell. Therefore let us not take off ourselves too soon, nor pull off the plaster before the cure be wrought, but keep ourselves under this work till sin be the sourest, and Christ the sweetest of all things. And when God's hand is upon us in any kind, it is good to divert our sorrow for other things to the root of all, which is sin: let our grief run most in that channel, that as sin bred grief, so grief may consume sin.

But are we not bruised unless we grieve more for sin than we do for punishment?

Sometimes our grief from outward grievances may lie heavier upon the soul, than grief for God's displeasure; because in such cases the grief works upon the whole man, both outward and inward, and hath nothing to stay it, but a little spark of faith: which by reason of the violent impression of the grievance, is suspended in the exercises of it: and this is most felt in sudden distresses which come upon the soul as a torrent or land-flood, and especially in bodily distempers, which by reason of the sympathy between the soul and the body, work upon the soul so far, as they hinder not only the spiritual, but often the natural acts. Hereupon Saint James wisheth in affliction to pray ourselves, but in case of sickness to *send for the elders*, Jam. v. 14; that may, as those in the Gospel, offer up the sick person to God in their prayers, being unable to present their own case. Hereupon God admitteth of such a plea from the sharpness and bitterness of the grievance, as in David, *Psalm* vi. &c. *The Lord knoweth whereof we are made, he remembereth we are but dust*, Psalm ciii. 14;

that our strength is not the strength of steel. It is a branch of his faithfulness unto us as his creatures, whence he is called *a faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. iv. 19; *God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able*, 1 Cor. x. 13. There were certain commandments which the Jews called the hedges of the law: as to fence men off from cruelty, he commanded they should not *take the dam with the young, nor seethe the kid in the mother's milk*, Exod. xxiii. 19, *nor muzzle the mouth of the ox*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 9. Hath God care of beasts, and not of his more noble creature? and therefore we ought to judge charitably of the complaints of God's people, which are rung from them in such cases: Job had the esteem with God of a patient man, notwithstanding those passionate complaints; faith overborne for the present will get ground again; and grief for sin, although it come short of grief for misery, in violence, yet it goeth beyond it in constancy; as a running stream fed with a spring holdeth out, when a sudden swelling brook faileth.

For the concluding of this point, and our encouragement to a thorough work of bruising, and patience under God's bruising of us, let all know that none are fitter for comfort than those that think themselves furthest off. Men, for the most part, are not lost enough in their own feeling, for a Saviour. A holy despair in ourselves is the ground of true hope, *Hos.* xiv. 3. In God the fatherless find mercy: if men were more fatherless, they should feel more God's fatherly affection from heaven: for God that *dwelleth in the highest heavens*, Isai. lxvi. 2, dwelleth likewise in the lowest soul. Christ's sheep are weak sheep, and wanting in something or other; he therefore ap-

plieth himself to the necessities of every sheep. *He seeks that which was lost, and brings again that which was driven out of the way, and binds up that which was broken, and strengthens the weak*, Ezek. xxxiv. 15, his tenderest care is over the weakest. The lambs he carrieth in his bosom, *Isai.* xl. 11: *Peter, feed my lambs.* He was most familiar and open to the troubled souls. How careful was he that Peter and the rest of the apostles should not be too much dejected after his resurrection? *Go tell the disciples, and tell Peter*, Mark xvi. 7: Christ knew that guilt of their unkindness in leaving of him had dejected their spirits. How gently did he endure Thomas his unbelief? and stooped so far unto his weakness, as to suffer him to thrust his hand into his side.

CHAP. V.

Grace is little at first.

FOR the second branch; God will not quench the smoking flax, or wick, but will blow it up till it flameth. In smoking flax there is but a little light, and that weak, as being not able to flame, and this little mixed with smoke.

The observations hence are first, that in God's children, especially in their first conversion, there is but a little measure of grace, and that little mixed with much corruption, which, as smoke, is offensive. Secondly, that Christ will not quench this smoking flax.

For the first; *Grace is little at the first.* There are several ages in Christians, some babes, some young men: grace is as *a grain of mustard seed*, Mat. xvii. 20. Nothing so little as grace at first, and nothing more

glorious afterward: things of greatest perfection are longest in coming to their growth. Man, the perfectest creature, comes to perfection by little and little; worthless things, as mushrooms and the like, like Jonas' gourd, soon spring up, and soon vanish. A new creature is the most excellent frame in all the world, therefore it groweth up by degrees; we see in nature, that a mighty oak riseth of an acorn. It is with a Christian as it was with Christ, who sprang out of the dead stock of Jesse, out of David's family, *Isa.* liii. 2, when it was at the lowest, but he grew up higher than the heavens. It is not with the trees of righteousness, as it was with the trees of Paradise, which were created all perfect at the first. The seeds of all the creatures in this goodly frame of the world were hid in the chaos, in that confused mass at the first, out of which God did command all creatures to arise; in the small seeds of plants lie hid both bulk and branches, bud and fruit. In a few principles lie hid all comfortable conclusions of holy truth. All those glorious fire-works of zeal and holiness in the saints had their beginning from a few sparks.

Let us not therefore be discouraged at the small beginnings of grace, but look on ourselves, as *elected to be blameless and without spot*, Eph. i. 4. Let us only look on our imperfect beginning, to enforce further strife to perfection, and to keep us in a low conceit. Otherwise, in case of discouragement, we must consider ourselves, as Christ doth, who looks on us as such as he intendeth to fit for himself. Christ valueth us by what we shall be, and by that we are elected unto. We call a little plant a tree, because it is growing up to be so. *Who is he that despiseth the day of little things?* Zech. iv. 10. Christ would not have us despise little things.

The glorious angels disdain not attendance on little ones; little in their own eyes, and little in the eyes of the world.

Grace, though little in quantity, yet is much in vigour and worth.

It is Christ that raiseth the worth of little and mean places and persons. *Bethlehem the least*, Micah v. 2, Mat. ii. 6, and yet not the least; the least in itself, not the least in respect Christ was born there. The *second temple*, Hag. ii. 9, came short of the outward magnificence of the former; yet more glorious than the first, because Christ came into it. The Lord of the temple came into his own temple. The pupil of the eye is very little, yet seeth a great part of the heaven at once. A pearl, though little, yet is of much esteem: nothing in the world of so good use, as the least dram of grace.

CHAP. VI.

Grace is mingled with Corruption.

BUT grace is not only little, but mingled with corruption; whereof it is, that a Christian is said to be smoking flax. Whence we see, that *grace doth not waste corruption all at once, but some is left to conflict withal.* The purest actions of the purest men need Christ to perfume them, and so is his office. When we pray, we need to pray again for Christ to pardon the defects of them. See some instances of this smoking flax. Moses at the Red Sea, being in a great perplexity, and knowing not what to say, or which way to turn him, groaned to God: no doubt this was a great conflict in him. In great distresses *we know not what to pray, but the Spirit makes request with sighs that cannot be ex-*

pressed, Rom. viii. 26. Broken hearts can yield but broken prayers.

When David was before the king of Gath, 1 Sam. 21, and disfigured himself in an uncomely manner, in that smoke there was some fire also; you may see what an excellent psalm he makes upon that occasion; wherein, upon experience, he saith, *The Lord is near unto them that are of a contrite spirit*, Psalm xxxiv. 18; *I said in my haste, I am cast out of thy sight;* there is *smoke: yet thou heardest the voice of my prayer*, Psalm xxxi. 22; there is *fire*. *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* Mat. viii. 25, cry the disciples; here is smoke of infidelity, yet so much light of faith as stirred them up to pray to Christ. *Lord I believe;* there is *light:* but *help my unbelief*, Mat. ix. 24; there is *smoke*.

Jonas cries, *I am cast out of thy sight*, Jonas ii. 4; there is *smoke: yet will I look again to thy holy temple;* there is *light*.

O miserable man that I am, Rom. vii. 34, saith Saint Paul upon sense of his corruption; but yet breaks out into *thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

I sleep, saith the Church in the Canticles, *but my heart wakes*, Cant. v. 2. In the seven Churches, which for their light are called *seven golden candlesticks*, Rev. ii. and iii, most of them had much smoke with their light.

The ground of this mixture is, that we carry about us a double principle, grace and nature. The end of it is especially to preserve us from those two dangerous rocks which our natures are prone to dash upon, *security* and *pride;* and to force us to pitch our rest on justification, not sanctification, which besides imperfection hath some soil.

Our spiritual fire is like our ordinary fire here below, that is, mixed; but fire is most pure in its own element above; so shall all our graces be when we are where we would be, in heaven, which is our proper element.

From this mixture it is, that the people of God have so different judgments of themselves, looking sometimes at the work of grace, sometimes at the remainder of corruption, and when they look upon that, then they think they have no grace; though they love Christ in his ordinances and children, yet dare not challenge so near acquaintance as to be his. Even as a candle in the socket sometimes sheweth its light, and sometimes the shew of light is lost; so sometimes well persuaded they are of themselves, sometimes at a loss.

CHAP. VII.

Christ will not quench small and weak beginnings.

NOW for the second observation, *Christ will not quench the smoking flax*. First, because this spark is from heaven, it is his own, it is kindled by his own spirit. And secondly, it tendeth to the glory of his powerful grace in his children, that he preserveth light in the midst of darkness,—a spark in the midst of the swelling waters of corruption.

There is an especial blessing in that little spark; *when wine is found in a cluster, one saith, Destroy it not, for there is a blessing in it*, Isai. lxv. 8. We see how our Saviour Christ bore with Thomas in his doubting, *John* xx. 27; with the two disciples that went to Emmaus, who staggered, *whether he came to redeem Israel or no*, Luke xxiv. 21: he quenched not

that little light in Peter, which was smothered: Peter denied him, but he denied not Peter, *Mat.* xxvi. *If thou wilt, thou canst,* said one poor man in the Gospel, *Mat.* viii. 2; *Lord, if thou canst,* said another; both were this smoking flax, neither of both were quenched. If Christ had stood upon his own greatness, he would have rejected him that came with his *if* but Christ answers his *if* with a gracious and absolute grant, *I will, be thou clean.* The *woman* that was diseased with an issue did but *touch*, and with a trembling hand, and but *the hem of his garment*, and yet went away both healed and comforted. In the *seven churches*, Rev. ii. and iii, we see he acknowledgeth and cherisheth anything that was good in them. Because the disciples slept of infirmity, being oppressed with grief, our Saviour Christ frameth a comfortable excuse for them, *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*, Mat. xxvi. 41.

If Christ should not be merciful, he would miss of his own ends; *there is mercy with thee that thou mayst be feared.* Now all are willing to come under that banner of love which he spreadeth over his: *therefore to thee shall all flesh come*, Psalm lxv. 2. He useth moderation and care, *lest the spirits should fail before him, and the souls which he hath made*, Isai. lvii. 16. Christ's *heart yearned*, the text saith, *when he saw them without meat, lest they should faint:* much more will he have regard for the preventing of our spiritual faintings.

Here see the opposite disposition between the holy nature of Christ, and the impure nature of man. Man for a little smoke will quench the light: Christ ever we see cherisheth even the least beginnings. How bare he with the many imperfections of his poor

disciples? If he did sharply check them, it was in love, and that they might shine the brighter. Can we have a better pattern to follow than this of him by whom we hope to be saved? *We that are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of them that are weak*, Rom. xv. 1. *I become all things to all men, that I may win some*, 1 Cor. ix. 22. O that this gaining and winning disposition were more in many! Many, so far as in us lieth, are lost for want of encouragement. See how that faithful fisher of men, Saint Paul, labours to catch his judge, *I know thou believest the prophets*, Acts xxvi. 27; and then wisheth all saving good, but not bonds; he might have added them too, but he would not discourage one that made but an offer, he would therefore wish Agrippa only that which was good in religion. How careful was our blessed Saviour of *little ones* that they might not be *offended*, Mat. xii. and xiii. How doth he defend his disciples from malicious imputations of the Pharisees? How careful *not to put new wine into old vessels*, Mat. ix. 17, not to alienate new beginners with the austerities of religion (as some indiscreetly). O, saith he, they shall have time to fast when I am gone, and strength to fast when the Holy Ghost is come upon them.

It is not the best way to fall foul presently with young beginners for some lesser vanities, but shew them a more excellent way, and breed them up in positive grounds, and other things will be quickly out of credit with them. It is not amiss to conceal their wants, and to excuse some failings, to commend their performances, to cherish their towardness, to remove all rubs out of their way, to help them every way to bear the yoke of religion with greater ease, to bring

them in love with God and his service, lest they distaste it before they know it. For the most part we see Christ planteth in young beginners a love which we call *the first love*, Rev. ii. 4, to carry them through their profession with more delight, and doth not expose them to crosses before they have gathered strength; as we breed up young plants, and fence them from the weather, until they be rooted. Mercy to others should move us to deny ourselves in our lawful liberties oftentimes, in case of offence of weak ones; it is the *little ones that are offended*, Mat. xviii. 6. The weakest are aptest to think themselves despised, therefore we should be most careful to give them content.

It were a good strife amongst Christians, one to labour to give no offence, and the other to labour to take none. The best men are severe to themselves, tender over others.

Yet people should not tire and wear out the patience of others: nor should the weaker so far exact moderation from others, as to bear out themselves upon their indulgence, and so to rest in their own infirmities, with danger to their own souls, and scandal to the church.

Neither hereupon must they set light by the gifts of God in others, which grace teacheth to honour wheresoever they are found, but know their parts and place, and not enterprise anything above their measure, which may make both their persons and their case obnoxious to scorn. When blindness and boldness, ignorance and arrogance, weakness and wilfulness meet together in one, it renders men odious to God, it maketh men burdensome in society, dangerous in their counsels, troublers of better designs, un-

tractable and uncapable of better direction, miserable in the issue: where Christ sheweth his gracious power in weakness, he doth it by letting men understand themselves so far as to breed humility, and magnifying of God's love to such as they are: he doth it as a preservative against discouragements from *weakness*, seeing it bringeth men into a less distance from grace, as being an advantage to poverty of spirit, than greatness of condition and parts, which yield to corrupt nature fuel for pride. Christ refuseth none for weakness of parts, that none should be *discouraged*; accepteth of none for greatness, that none should be *lifted up* with that which is of so little reckoning with God. It is no great matter how dull the scholar be when Christ taketh upon him to be the teacher: who as he prescribeth what to understand, so he giveth understanding itself even to the simplest.

The church suffereth much from weak ones, therefore we may challenge liberty to deal with them, as *mildly*, so oftentimes *directly*. The scope of true love is to make the party better, which by concealment oftentimes is hindered: with some a spirit of meekness prevaileth most, but with some a rod. Some must be *pulled out of the fire*, Jude 23, with violence, and they will *bless God for us in the day of their visitation*. We see our Saviour multiplies *woe* upon *woe*, when he was to deal with hard-hearted *hypocrites*, Mat. xxiii; for hypocrites need stronger conviction than gross sinners, because their will is nought, and thereupon usually their conversion is violent. A hard knot must have an answerable wedge, else in a cruel pity we betray their souls. A sharp reproof sometimes is a precious pearl, and a *sweet balm*. The wounds of secure sinners will not

be healed with sweet words. The Holy Ghost came as well in *fiery tongues*, as in the likeness of a *dove*, and the same Holy Spirit will vouchsafe a spirit of prudence and discretion, which is the salt to season all our words and actions. And such wisdom will teach us *to speak a word in season*, Isai. l. 4, both to the weary, and likewise to the secure soul. And, indeed, he had need have *the tongue of the learned* that shall either raise up or cast down: but in this place I speak of mildness towards those that are weak and are sensible of it. These we must bring on gently, and *drive softly*, as Jacob did his cattle, *Gen.* xxxiii. 14, according to their pace, and as his children were able to endure.

Weak Christians are like glasses which are hurt with the least violent usage, otherwise if gently handled will continue a long time. *This honour* of gentle use we are to *give to the weaker vessels*, 1 Pet. iii. 7, by which we shall both preserve them, and likewise make them useful to the church and ourselves.

In unclean bodies if all ill humours be purged out, you shall purge life and all away. Therefore though God saith, that *he will fine them as silver is fined*, Zac. xiii. 9; yet, Isai. xlviii. 10, he said, *he hath fined them, but not as silver*, that is, so exactly as that no dross remaineth, for he hath respect to our weakness. Perfect refining is for another world, for the world of the *souls of perfect men*.

CHAP. VIII.

Tenderness required in Ministers toward young beginners.

DIVINES had need to take heed therefore how they deal with these in divers particulars: as first let them be careful they strain not things too high, making those general and necessary evidences of grace, which agree not to the experience of many a good Christian, and lay salvation and damnation upon those things that are not fit to bear so great a weight, whereupon men are groundlessly cast down lower by them, than they can hastily be raised up again by themselves or others. The ambassadors of so gentle a Saviour should not be over-masterly, setting up themselves in the hearts of people where Christ alone should sit as in his own temple. Too much respect to man was one of the inlets of popery; *let a man account of us as of the ministers of Christ*, 1 Cor. iv. 1, neither more nor less, just so much. How careful was St. Paul in cases of conscience not to lay a snare upon any weak conscience.

They should take heed likewise that they hide not their meaning in *dark speeches*, speaking in the clouds. Truth feareth nothing so much as concealment, and desireth nothing so much as clearly to be laid open to the view of all: when it is most naked, it is most lovely and powerful.

Our blessed Saviour as he took our nature upon him, so he took upon him our *familiar* manner of *speech*, which was part of his voluntary abasement. St. Paul was a profound man, 1. *Thes.* ii. 7, yet became as a *nurse* to the weaker sort.

That spirit of mercy that was in Christ should move his servants to be content to abase themselves for the good of the meanest. What made the *kingdom of heaven suffer violence*, Mat. xi. 22, after John the Baptist's time, but that comfortable truths were with that plainness and evidence laid open, that the people were so affected with them, as they offered a holy violence to them?

Christ chose those to preach mercy, which had felt most mercy, as St. Peter, and St. Paul; that they might be examples of what they taught. St. Paul *became all things to all men*, 1 Cor. ix. 2, stooping unto them for their good: Christ came down from Heaven, and emptied himself of Majesty in tender love to souls: shall we not come down from our high conceits to do any poor soul good? shall man be proud after God hath been humble? We see the ministers of Satan turn themselves into all shapes to *make proselytes*, Mat. xxiii. 15. A Jesuit will be every man. We see ambitious men study accommodation of themselves to the humours of those by whom they hope to be raised: and shall not we study application of ourselves to Christ by whom we hope to be advanced, nay, are already sitting with him in heavenly places? After we are gained to Christ ourselves, we should labour to gain others to Christ. Holy ambition and covetousness will move us to put upon ourselves the disposition of Christ; but we must put off ourselves first.

We should not, thirdly, rack their wits with curious or *doubtful disputes*, Rom. xiv. 1; for so we shall distract and tire them, and give occasion to make them cast off the care of all. That age of the church which was most fertile in *nice questions*, was most

barren in *religion*: for it makes people think religion to be only a matter of wit, in tying and untying of knots; the brains of men given that way are hotter usually than their hearts.

Yet notwithstanding, when we are cast into *times* and *places* wherein doubts are raised about main points, here people ought to labour to be established. God suffereth questions oftentimes to arise for trial of our love and exercise of our parts. Nothing is so certain as that which is certain after doubts. Shaking settles and roots. In a contentious age, it is a witty thing to be a Christian, and to know what to pitch their souls upon; it is an office of love here to take away the stones, and to smooth the way to Heaven. Therefore we must take heed that under pretence of avoidance of disputes, we do not suffer an adverse party to get ground upon the truth: for thus may we easily betray both the truth of God and souls of men.

And likewise those are failing, that by overmuch austerity drive back troubled souls from having comfort by them; for by this carriage many smother their temptations, and burn inwardly, because they have none into whose bosom they may vent their grief and ease their souls.

We must neither *bind* where God looseth, nor *loose* where God bindeth, nor *open* where God shutteth, nor *shut* where God openeth; the right use of the keys is always successful. In personal application there must be great heed taken; for a man may be a false prophet, and yet speak the truth, if it be not a truth to the person to whom he speaketh; if he *grieve those whom God hath not grieved*, by unseasonable truths, or by comforts in an ill way, the hearts of

the wicked may be strengthened. One man's meat may be another's bane.

If we look to the general temper of these times, rousing and waking scriptures are fittest; yet there be many broken spirits need soft and oily words. Even in the worst time the prophets mingled sweet comfort for the *hidden remnant* of faithful people. God hath *comfort, Comfort ye my people*, Isa. xl. 1, as well as *lift up thy voice as a trumpet*, Isa. lviii. 1.

And here likewise there needs a caveat. Mercy doth not rob us of our right judgment, as that we should take *stinking* fire-brands for *smoking flax*. None will claim mercy more of others, than those whose portion is due severity. This example doth not countenance *lukewarmness*, nor too much indulgence to those that need quickening. Cold diseases must have hot remedies. It made for the just commendations of the church of Ephesus, *that it could not bear with them which are evil*, Rev. ii. 2. We should so bear with others, as we discover withal a dislike of evil. Our Saviour Christ would not forbear sharp reproof, where he saw dangerous infirmities, in his most beloved disciples. It bringeth under a curse *to do the work of the Lord negligently*, Jer. xlviii. 10; even where it is a work of just severity; as when it is sheathing the sword in the bowels of the enemy. And those whom we suffer to be betrayed by their worst enemies, their sins, will have just cause to curse us another day.

It is hard to preserve just bounds of mercy and severity, without a spirit above our own; which we ought to desire to be led withal in all things. That *wisdom which dwelleth with prudence*, Prov. viii. 12, will guide us in these particulars, without which

virtue is not virtue, truth not truth; the rule and the case must be laid together; for if there be not a narrow insight, seeming likeness in conditions will be the breeder of errors in our opinions of them. Those fiery, tempestuous, and destructive spirits in popery, that seek to promote their religion by cruelty, shew that they are strangers to that wisdom which is from above, which maketh men *gentle*, *peaceable*, and ready to shew that *mercy* they have felt before themselves. It is a way of prevailing, as agreeable to Christ, so likewise to man's nature, to prevail by some forbearance and moderation.

And yet oft we see a false spirit in those that call for *moderation*: it is but to carry their own project with the greater strength; and if they prove of the prevailing hand, they will hardly shew that moderation to others they now call for from others. And there is a proud kind of moderation likewise, when men will take upon them to censure both parties, as if they were wiser than *both*, although if the spirit be right, a looker on may see more than those that are in conflict.

CHAP. IX.

Governors should be tender of weak ones, and also private Christians.

SO in the censures of the church, it is more suitable to the spirit of Christ to incline to the milder part, and not to kill a fly on the forehead with a beetle, nor shut men out of heaven for a trifle. The very snuffers of the tabernacle were made of pure gold to shew the purity of those censures, whereby the light of the church is kept bright. That power

that is given to the church is given for edification, not destruction. How careful was St. Paul, that the *incestuous Corinthian*, 2 Cor. ii. 7, repenting should not be swallowed up with too much grief. As for civil magistrates, they for civil exigences and reasons of state, must let the law have its course; yet thus far they should imitate this mild king, as not to mingle *bitterness* and *passion* with authority derived from God. Authority is a beam of God's majesty, and prevaileth most where there is least mixture of that which is man's. It requireth more than ordinary wisdom to manage it aright. This string must not be too much strained up, nor too much let loose. Justice is an harmonical thing. Herbs hot or cold beyond a certain degree, kill. We see even contrary elements preserved in one body by a wise contemperation. Justice in rigour is oft extreme injustice, where some considerable circumstances should incline to moderation; and the reckoning will be easier for bending rather to moderation than rigour.

Insolent carriage toward miserable persons, if humbled, is unseemly in any who look for mercy themselves. Misery should be a loadstone of mercy, not a footstool for pride to trample on.

Sometimes it falleth out that those that are under the government of others, are most injurious by waywardness and harsh censures, herein disparaging and discouraging the endeavours of superiors for public good. In so great weakness of man's nature, and especially in this crazy age of the world, we ought to take in good part any moderate happiness we enjoy by government; and not be altogether as a nail in the wound, exasperating things by misconstruction. Here love should have a mantle to cast upon lesser errors of those above us. Oftentimes the poor man

is the oppressor by unjust clamours; we should labour to give the best interpretation to the actions of governors that the nature of the actions will possibly bear.

In the last place there is something for private Christians, even for all of us in our common relations to take notice of: we are debtors to the weak in many things.

1. Let us be watchful in the use of our liberty, and labour to be inoffensive in our carriage, that our example *compel them not*. There is a commanding force in an example, as Peter, *Gal.* ii. Looseness of life is cruelty to ourselves, and to the souls of others, though we cannot keep them from perishing which will perish, in regard of the event; yet if we do that which is apt of itself to destroy the souls of others, their ruin is imputable to us.

2. Let men take heed of taking up Satan's office, in depraving the good actions of others, as he did Job's, *doth he serve God for nought?* or slandering their persons, judging of them according to the wickedness that is in their own hearts. The devil getteth more by such discouragements, and these reproaches that are cast upon religion, than by fire and fagot. These, as unseasonable frosts, nip all gracious offers in the bud; and as much as in them lieth, with Herod, labour to *kill* Christ in young professors. A Christian is a hallowed and a sacred thing, Christ's *temple; and he that destroyeth his temple, him will Christ destroy*, 1 Cor. iii. 17.

3. Amongst the things that are to be taken heed of, there is amongst private Christians a bold usurpation of censure towards others, not considering their temptations. Some will unchurch and unbrother in a passion. But distempers do not alter true relations,

though the child in a fit should disclaim the mother, yet the mother will not disclaim the child.

There is therefore in these judging times good ground of St. James his caveat, that there should not *be too many masters*, Jam. iii. 1; that we should not smite one another by hasty censures, especially in things of an indifferent nature; some things are as the mind of him is that doth them, or doth them not; for both may be unto the Lord.

A holy aim in things of a middle nature makes the judgments of men, although seemingly contrary, yet not so much blamable. Christ, for the good aims he seeth in us, overlooketh any ill in them, so far as not to lay it to our charge.

Men must not be too curious in prying into the weaknesses of others; we should labour rather to see what they have that is *for eternity*, to incline our heart to love them, than into that weakness which the spirit of God will in time consume, to estrange us: some think it strength of Grace to endure nothing in the weaker, whereas the strongest are readiest to bear with the infirmities of the weak.

Where most holiness is, there is most moderation, where it may be without prejudice of piety to God and the good of others: we see in Christ a marvellous temper of absolute holiness, with great moderation, in this text. What had become of our salvation if he had stood upon terms, and not stooped thus low unto us? We need not affect to be more holy than Christ, it is no flattery to do as he doth, so it be to edification.

The Holy Ghost is content to dwell in smoky offensive souls; oh that that spirit would breathe into our spirits the like merciful disposition! We endure the

bitterness of wormwood, and other distasteful plants and herbs, only because we have some experience of some wholesome quality in them; and why should we reject men of useful parts and graces, only for some harshness of disposition, which, as it is offensive to us, so grieveth themselves?

Grace whilst we live *here* is in souls, which as they are unperfectly renewed, so they dwell in bodies subject to several humours, which will incline the soul sometimes to excess in one passion, sometimes to excess in another.

Bucer was a deep and a moderate divine; upon long experience he resolved to refuse none in whom he saw *(aliquid Christi)* something of Christ.

The best Christians in this state of imperfection are like gold that is a little too light, which needs some grains of allowance to make it pass. You must grant the best their allowance. We must supply out of our love and mercy, that which we see wanting in them.

The church of Christ is a common hospital, wherein all are in some measure sick of some spiritual disease or other; that we should all have ground of exercising mutually the spirit of wisdom and meekness.

This that we may the better do, let us put upon ourselves the spirit of Christ. The spirit of God carrieth a majesty with it. Corruption will hardly yield to corruption in another. Pride is intolerable to pride. The weapons of this warfare must *not* be *carnal*, 2 Cor. x. 4. The great apostles would not set upon the work of the ministry, until they were *clothed as it were with power from on high*, Luke xxiv. 49. The Spirit will only work with his own tools. And we

should think what affection Christ would carry to the party in this case. That great physician, as he had a quick eye and a healing tongue, so had he a gentle hand, and a tender heart.

And secondly, put upon us the condition of him whom we deal withal: we are, or have been, or may be such: make the case our own, and withal consider in what near relation a Christian standeth unto us, even as a brother, a fellow-member, heir of the same salvation. And therefore let us take upon ourselves a tender care of them every way; and especially in cherishing the peace of their consciences. Conscience is a tender and delicate thing, and so must be used. It is like a lock, if the wards be troubled, it will be troublesome to open.

CHAP. X.

Rules to try whether we be such as Christ will not quench.

FOR trial, to let us see whether we be this smoking flax, which Christ will not quench. In this trial remember these :—1. *Rules.* 2. *Signs.*

1. We must have two eyes, one to see imperfections in ourselves and others; the other to see what is good. *I am black*, saith the church, *but yet comely*. Those ever want comfort that are much in quarrelling with themselves, and through their infirmities are prone to feed upon such bitter things, as will most nourish those distempers they are sick of. These delight to be looking on the dark side of the cloud only.

2. We must not judge of ourselves always according to present feeling; for in temptations we shall see nothing but smoke of distrustful thoughts. Fire may

be raked up in the ashes, though not seen; life in the winter is hid in the root.

3. Take heed of false reasoning; as because our fire doth not blaze out, as others, therefore we have no fire at all; and by false conclusions come to sin against the commandment in *bearing false witness* against ourselves. The prodigal would not say he was no son, but that he was not worthy to be *called a son*, Luke xv. 19. We must neither trust to false evidence, nor deny true; for so we should dishonour the work of God's spirit in us, and lose the help of that evidence which would cherish our love to Christ, and arm us against Satan's discouragements. Some are so faulty this way, as if they had been hired by Satan, the *accuser of the brethren*, Rev. xii. 10, to plead for him, in accusing themselves.

4. Know, for a ground of this, that in the covenant of grace, God requires the truth of grace, not any certain measure; and a spark of fire is fire as well as the whole element. Therefore we must look to grace in the spark as well as in the flame. All have not the like *strong*, yet the like *precious faith*, 2 Pet. i. 1, whereby they lay hold, and put on, the perfect righteousness of Christ. A weak hand may receive a rich jewel; a few grapes will show that the plant is a vine, and not a thorn. It is one thing to be wanting in grace, and another thing to want grace altogether, God knoweth we have nothing of ourselves, therefore in the covenant of grace he requireth no more than he giveth, and giveth what he requireth, and accepteth what he giveth; *He that hath not a lamb may bring a pair of turtle doves*, Lev. xii. 6. What is the Gospel itself but a merciful moderation, in which Christ's obedience is esteemed ours, and our sins laid

upon him, and wherein God of a judge becometh a father, pardoning our sins and accepting our obedience though feeble and blemished? We are now brought to heaven under the covenant of grace by a way of love and mercy.

It will prove a special help to know distinctly the difference between the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*, between Moses and Christ; Moses without all mercy *breaketh all bruised reeds*, and *quencheth all smoking flax*. For the law requireth, 1. personal, 2. perpetual, 3. perfect obedience, 4. and from a perfect heart; and that under a most terrible curse, and giveth no strength, a severe task-master, like Pharaoh's, requiring the whole tale, and yet giving no straw. Christ cometh with blessing after blessing even upon those whom Moses had cursed, and with healing balm for those wounds which Moses had made.

The same duties are required in both covenants; as, *to love the Lord with all our hearts, with all our souls*, &c. Deut. vi. 5. In the covenant of *works*, this must be taken in the rigour; but under the covenant of grace, as it is a sincere endeavour proportionable to grace received, and so it must be understood of Josias, and others, when it is said, *they loved God with all their hearts*, &c. It must have an evangelical mitigation.

The law is sweetened by the Gospel, and becometh delightful to *the inner man*, Rom. vii. 22. Under this gracious covenant sincerity is perfection. This is the *death in the pot* in the Roman religion, that they confound two covenants; and it deads the comfort of drooping ones, that they cannot distinguish them. And thus they suffer themselves to be *held under bondage*, Isai. lxi. 1, 2, when Christ hath set them

free; and stay themselves *in the prison*, when Christ hath set open the doors before them.

5. Grace sometimes is so little as is undiscernible to us; the Spirit sometimes hath secret operations in us, which we know not for the present; but Christ knoweth. Sometimes in bitterness of temptation, when the Spirit struggles with sense of God's anger, we are apt to think God an enemy; and a troubled soul is like troubled water, we can see nothing in it; and so far as it is not cleansed, it will cast up mire and dirt. It is full of *objections* against itself, yet for the most part we may discern something of this hidden life, and of these smothered sparks.

In a gloomy day there is so much light whereby we may know it to be day, and not night; so there is something in a Christian under a cloud, whereby he may be discerned to be a true believer, and not a hypocrite. There is no mere darkness in the state of grace, but some beam of light, whereby the *kingdom of darkness* wholly prevaileth not.

CHAP. XI.

Signs of smoking Flax which Christ will not quench.

THESE things premised, let us know for a trial, First, if there be any holy fire in us, it is kindled from heaven by the *Father of lights*, who *commanded light to shine out of darkness*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. As it is kindled in the use of means, so it is fed. The light in us, and the light in the word, spring one from the other, and both from the holy Spirit; and, therefore, those that regard not the word, it is because there *is no light in them*, Isai. viii. 20. Heavenly truths must have a heavenly light to dis-

cern them. Natural men see heavenly things, but not in their own proper light, but by an inferior light; God in every converted man putteth a light into the eye of his soul, proportionable to the light of truths revealed unto him. A carnal eye will never see spiritual things.

Secondly, the least divine light hath heat with it in some measure: light in the understanding breedeth heat of love in the affections. In what measure the sanctified understanding seeth a thing to be true, or good, in that measure the will embraces it. Weak light breeds weak inclinations; a strong light, strong inclinations. A little spiritual light is of strength enough to answer strong objections of flesh and blood, and to look through all earthly allurements and opposing hindrances, presenting them as far inferior to those heavenly objects it eyeth.

All light that is not spiritual, because it wanteth the strength of sanctifying grace, yieldeth to every little temptation, especially when it is fitted and suited to personal inclinations. This is the reason why Christians that have light little for quantity, but yet heavenly for quality, hold out, when men of larger apprehensions sink.

This prevailing of light in the soul is because, together with the spirit of illumination, there goeth, in the godly, *a spirit of power*, 2 Tim. i. 7, to subdue the heart to truth revealed, and to put a taste and relish into the will, suitable to the sweetness of the truths; else a mere natural will will rise against supernatural truths, as having an antipathy and enmity against them. In the godly, holy truths are conveyed by way of a taste; gracious men have a spiritual palate as well as a spiritual eye. Grace altereth the relish.

Thirdly, where this heavenly light is kindled, it directeth in the right way. For it is given for that use, to shew us the best way, and to guide in the particular passages of life: if otherwise, it is but common light, given only for the good of others. Some have light of knowledge, yet follow not that light, but are guided by carnal reason and policy: such as the prophet speaks of, *All you that kindle a fire, walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled, but this you shall have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow*, Isaiah l. 11. God delights to confound carnal wisdom, as enmity to him, and robbing him of his prerogative, who is God only wise. We must therefore walk by his light, and not the blaze of our own fire. *God must light our candle*, Psalm xviii. 28, or else we are like to *abide in darkness*. Those sparks that are not kindled from heaven are not strong enough to keep us from lying down in sorrow, though they make a greater blaze and shew than the light from above, as madmen do greater things than sober, but by a false strength; so the excess of these men's joy ariseth from a false light, *the candle of the wicked shall be put out*.

The light that some men have, it is like lightning, which after a sudden flash leaveth them more in darkness. They can love the light as it shines, but hate it as it discovers and directs. A little holy light will enable to keep the word, and not betray religion, and deny Christ's name, as Christ speaketh of the church of Philadelphia, *Rev.* iii. 8.

Fourthly, where this *fire* is, it will sever things of divers natures, and shew a difference between things, as gold and dross. It will sever between flesh and

spirit, and shew that this is of *nature*, this of *grace*. All is not ill in a bad action, or good in a good action. There is gold in ore, which God and his Spirit in us can distinguish. A carnal man's heart is like a dungeon, wherein is nothing to be seen but horror and confusion; this light maketh us judicious and humble, upon clearer sight of God's purity, and our own uncleanness; and maketh us able to discern of the work of the Spirit in another.

Fifthly, so far as a man is spiritual, so far is light delightful unto him, as willing to see anything amiss, that he may reform, and any further service discovered that he may perform, because he truly hateth ill and loveth good: if he goeth against light discovered, he will soon be reclaimed, because light hath a friendly party within him. Whereupon, at a little sight of his error he is soon counselable, as David in his intendment to kill Nabal, and *blesseth* God afterwards when he is stopped in an ill way, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 32.

In a carnal man the light breaks in upon him, but he labours to shut the passages, he hath no delight to come to the light. It is impossible before the Spirit of grace hath subdued the heart, but that it should sin against the light, either by resisting of it, or keeping it prisoner under base lusts, and burying it as it were in the earth; or perverting of it, and so making it an agent and factor for the flesh, in searching out arguments to plead for it, or abusing that little measure of light they have, to keep out a greater, higher, and more heavenly light, and so at length make that light they have a misleading guide to utter darkness. And the reason is, because it hath no friend within, the soul is in a contrary frame; and light always hindereth that sinful peace that men are

willing to speak to themselves: whence we see it oft enrages men the more, as the sun in the spring breedeth aguish distempers, because it stirreth humours, and doth not waste them. There is nothing in the world more unquiet, than the heart of a wicked man, that sitteth under means of knowledge, until like a thief he hath put out the candle that he may sin with the less check. Spiritual light is distinct, it seeth spiritual good, with application to ourselves; but common light is confused, and lets sin lie quiet. Where fire is in any degree, it will fight against the contrary matter: God hath put irreconcileable hatred between *light* and *darkness* at first, so between good and ill, *flesh* and *spirit*, Gal. v. 17. Grace will never join with sin, no more than fire with water. Fire will mingle with no contrary, but preserveth its own purity, and is never corrupted as other elements are. Therefore those that plead and plot for liberties of the flesh, shew themselves strangers from the life of God. Upon this strife gracious men oft complain that they have no grace, but they contradict themselves in their complaints; as if a man that seeth, should complain he cannot see, or complain that he is asleep, when the very complaint springing from a displeasure against sin, sheweth that there is something in him opposite to sin. Can a dead man complain? Some things, though bad in themselves, yet discover good; as smoke discovers some fire. Breaking out in the body shews strength of nature. Some infirmities discover more good than some seeming beautiful actions; excess of passion in opposing evil, though not to be justified, yet sheweth a better spirit than a calm temper, where there is just cause of being moved. Better it is, that the water should run some-

thing muddily, than not at all. Job had more grace in his distempers, than his friends in their seeming wise carriage. Actions soiled with some weaknesses are more accepted than complemental performances.

Fire, where it is in the least measure, is in some degree active; so the least measure of grace is working, as springing from the spirit of God, which from the working nature of it, is compared to fire. Nay, in sins, when there seemeth nothing active, but corruption, yet there is a contrary principle, which breaks the force of sin, so that it is not *out of measure sinful*, as in those that are carnal, *Rom.* vii. 13.

Fire maketh metals pliable and malleable, so doth grace, where it is begun; it worketh the heart to be pliable and ready for all good impressions. Untractable spirits shew that they are not so much as smoking flax.

Fire turneth all, as much as it can, to fire; so grace laboureth to breed the like impression in others, and make as many good as it can: grace likewise maketh a gracious use even of natural and civil things, and doth spiritualize them: what another man doth only civilly, a gracious man will do holily. Whether he eateth or drinketh, or whatsoever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God, making everything serviceable to the last end.

Sparks by nature fly upwards; so the spirit of grace carrieth the soul heaven-ward, and setteth before us holy and heavenly aims: as it was kindled from heaven, so it carries us back to heaven. The part followeth the whole: fire mounteth upward, so every spark to its own element. Where the aim and bent of the soul is God-wards, there is grace, though opposed. The least measure of it is holy desires

springing from faith and love, for we cannot desire anything which we do not believe first to be, and the desire of it issues from love. Hence desires are counted a part of the thing desired in some measure, but then they must be, first, constant; for constancy shews that they are supernaturally natural, and not enforced: secondly, they must be carried to spiritual things, as to believe, to love God, &c. not out of a special exigent, because if now they had grace, they think they might escape some danger, but as a loving heart is carried to the thing loved for some excellency in itself: and thirdly, with desire there is grief when it is hindered, which stirs up to prayer: *Oh that my ways were so directed, that I might keep thy statutes!* Psalm cxix. 5. *O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver?* &c. Rom. vii. 24: fourthly, desires put us onward still, O that I might serve God with more liberty; O that I were more free from these offensive, unsavory, noisome lusts.

Fire worketh itself, if it hath any matter to feed on, into a larger compass, and mounteth higher and higher, and the higher it riseth, the purer is the flame. So where true grace is, it *groweth* in measure and purity. Smoking flax will grow to a flame; and as it increaseth, so it worketh out the contrary, and refineth itself more and more. Therefore it argueth a false heart to set ourselves a measure in grace, and to *rest* in beginnings; alleging, that Christ will not quench the smoking flax. But this merciful disposition in Christ is joined with perfect holiness, shewed in perfect hatred to sin; for rather than sin should not have its deserved punishment, himself became a sacrifice for sin, wherein his Father's holiness and his own most of all shined. And besides this, in the

work of sanctification, though he favours his work in us, yet favours he not sin in us; for he will never take his hand from his work, until he hath taken away sin even in its very being from our natures: the same Spirit that purified that blessed mass whereof he was made cleanseth us by degrees to be suitable to so holy a head, and frameth the judgment and affection of all to whom he sheweth mercy, to concur with his own, in labouring to further his ends, in abolishing of sin out of our nature.

CHAP. XII.

Scruples hindering comfort removed.

FROM the meditation of these rules and signs, much comfort may be brought into the souls of the weakest; which that it may be in the more abundance, let me add something for the helping them over some few ordinary objections, and secret thoughts against themselves, which, getting within the heart, oftentimes keep them under.

Some think they have no faith at all, because they have no full assurance; when as the fairest fire that can be will have some smoke. The best actions will smell of the smoke. The mortar wherein garlic hath been stamped will always smell of it: so all our actions will savour something of the old man.

In weakness of body some think grace dieth, because their performances are feeble, their spirits, being the instruments of their souls' actions, being wasted; not considering that God regards those hidden sighs of those that want abilities to express them outwardly; he that pronounceth them blessed that consider the poor, will have a merciful consideration of such himself.

Some again are haunted with hideous representations to their fantasies, and with vile and unworthy thoughts of God, of Christ, of the word, &c. which, as busy flies, disquiet and molest their peace; these are cast in like wildfire by Satan, as may be discerned by the, 1. strangeness, 2. strength and violence, 3. horribleness of them even unto nature corrupt. A pious soul is no more guilty of them, than Benjamin of Joseph's cup put into his sack. Amongst other helps prescribed by godly writers, as abomination of them, and diversion from them to other things, &c. let this be one, to complain unto Christ against them, and to fly under the wings of his protection, and to desire him to take our part against his and our enemy. Shall every sin and blasphemy of man be forgiven, and not these blasphemous thoughts, which have the devil for their father? When Christ himself was therefore molested in this kind, that he might succour all poor souls in the like case.

But there is a difference betwixt Christ and us in this case, by reason that Satan had nothing of his own in Christ, his suggestions left no impression at all in his holy nature; but, as sparks falling into the sea, were presently quenched. Satan's temptations of Christ were only suggestions on Satan's part, and apprehensions of the vileness of them on Christ's part; to apprehend ill suggested by another, is not ill; it was Christ's grievance, but Satan's sin; but thus he yielded himself to be tempted, that he might both pity us in our conflicts, and train us up to manage our spiritual weapons as he did. Christ could have overcome him by power, but he did it by argument; but when Satan cometh to us, he findeth something of his own in us, which holdeth correspondency and hath

intelligence with him; there is the same enmity in *our nature* to God and goodness in some degree, that is in Satan himself; whereupon his temptations fasten for the most part some taint upon us. And if there wanted a devil to suggest, yet sinful thoughts would arise from *within us;* though none were cast in from without, we have a mint of them within: these thoughts, if the soul dwell on them so long as to suck or draw from and by them any sinful delight, then they leave a more heavy guilt upon the soul, and hinder our sweet communion with God, and interrupt our peace, and put a contrary relish into the soul, disposing of it to greater sins. All scandalous breakings out are but thoughts at the first. Ill thoughts are as little thieves, which, creeping in at the window, open the door to greater; thoughts are seeds of actions. These, especially when they are helped forward by Satan, make the life of many good Christians almost a martyrdom. In this case it is an unsound comfort that some minister, that ill thoughts arise from nature, and what is natural is excusable; but we must know, that nature, as it came out of God's hands at the first, had no such risings out of it: the soul, as inspired of God, had no such unsavoury breathings; but since that by sin it betrayed itself, it is in some sort natural to it to forge sinful imaginations, and to be a furnace of such sparks; and this is an aggravation of the sinfulness of natural corruption, that it is so deeply rooted, and so generally spread in our nature.

It furthereth humiliation to know the whole breadth and depth of sin; only this, that our nature now so far as it is unrenewed, is so unhappily fruitful in ill thoughts, ministers this comfort, that it is not our case alone, as if our condition herein were severed

from others, as some have been tempted to think, even almost to despair; none, say they, have such a loathsome nature as I have; this springs from *ignorance* of the spreading of original sin, for what can come from an unclean thing, but that which is unclean? *as in the water face answers face, so the polluted heart of one man answereth to the heart of another*, Prov. xxvii. 19, where grace hath not made some difference. As in annoyances from Satan, so here, the best way is to lay open our complaints to Christ, and cry with Saint Paul, *O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!* Rom. vii. 24, 25: upon this venting of his distressed soul, he presently found comfort; for he breaketh into thanksgiving, *thanks be to God*, &c. And it is good to take advantage from hence to hate this noisome body of death the more, and to draw nearer unto God, as that holy man after his *foolish and beastly thoughts*, Psalm lxxiii. 22 and 28, did, and to keep our hearts closer to God, seasoning them with heavenly meditations in the morning, storing up good matter that our heart may be a good treasury, and begging of Christ his holy Spirit to stop that cursed issue, and to be a living spring of better thoughts in us. Nothing more abaseth the spirits of holy men that desire to delight in God after they have escaped the common defilements of the world, than these unclean issues of spirit, as being most contrary to God, who is a *pure Spirit:* but the very irksomeness of them yields matter of comfort against them; they force the soul to all spiritual exercises, to *watchfulness*, and a more near *walking with* God, and to raise itself to thoughts of a higher nature, which the truth of God, works of God, communion of saints, the

mystery of godliness, the consideration of the terror of the Lord, of the excellency of the state of a Christian, and conversation suitable, do abundantly minister. They discover to us a necessity of daily purging and pardoning grace, and of seeking to be found in Christ, and so bring the best often upon their knees.

But our chief comfort is, that our blessed Saviour as he bad Satan *avaunt* from himself after he had given way awhile to his impudency, *Mat.* iv. 10; so he will command him to be gone from us, when it shall be good for us; he must *be gone* at a word. And he can and will likewise in his due time rebuke the rebellious and extravagant stirrings of our hearts, and bring all the thoughts of the inner man in subjection to himself.

Some think when they begin once to be troubled with the smoke of corruption more than they were before, therefore they are worse than they were. It is true, that corruptions appear now more than before, but they are less.

For, first, sin the more it is seen the more it is hated, and thereupon is the less. Motes are in a room before the sun shines, but they then only appear.

Secondly, contraries the nearer they are one to another, the sharper is the conflict betwixt them: now of all enemies the spirit and the flesh are nearest one to another, being both in the soul of a regenerate man, and in faculties of the soul, and in every action that springeth from those faculties, and therefore it is no marvel the soul, the seat of this battle, thus divided in itself, be as smoking flax.

Thirdly, the more grace, the more spiritual life,

and the more spiritual life, the more antipathy to the contrary; whence none are so sensible of corruption, as those that have the most living souls.

And fourthly, when men give themselves to carnal liberties, their corruptions trouble them not, as not being bound and tied up; but when once grace suppresseth their extravagant and licentious excesses, then the flesh boileth, as disdaining to be confined; yet they are better now than they were before. That matter which yields smoke was in the torch before it was lighted; but it is not offensive till the torch begins to burn. Let such know, that if the smoke be once offensive to them, it is a sign that there is light. It is better to enjoy the benefit of light, though with smoke, than to be altogether in the dark.

Neither is smoke so offensive, as light is comfortable to us, it yielding an evidence of truth of grace in the heart; therefore, though it be cumbersome in the conflict, yet it is comfortable in the evidence. It is better corruption should offend us now, than by giving way to it to redeem a little peace with loss of comfort afterwards. Let such therefore as are at variance and odds with their corruptions, look upon this text as their portion of comfort.

CHAP. XIII.

Set upon duties, notwithstanding weaknesses.

HERE is a use of encouragement to duty, that Christ will not quench the smoking flax, but blow it up. Some are loth to perform good duties, because they feel their hearts rebelling, and duties come off untowardly. We should not avoid good actions for the infirmities cleaving unto them: Christ

looketh more at the good in them that he meaneth to cherish, than the ill in them that he meaneth to abolish. A sick man though in eating he something increaseth the disease, yet he will eat, that nature may get strength against the disease: so though sin cleaveth to what we do, yet let us do it, since we have to deal with so good a Lord, and the more strife we meet withal, the more acceptance: Christ loveth to taste of the good fruits that come from us, although they will always relish of the old stock.

A Christian complaineth he cannot pray; O I am troubled with so many distracting thoughts, and never more than now. But hath he put into thine heart a desire to pray? he will hear the desires of his own Spirit in thee. *We know not what to pray for as we ought* (nor do any thing else as we ought), *but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, with inexpressible sighs and groans*, Rom. viii. 26, which are not hid from God. *My groanings are not hid from thee*, Psalm xxxviii. 9. God can pick sense out of a confused prayer. These desires cry louder in his ears, than thy sins. Sometimes a Christian hath such confused thoughts, he can say nothing, but as a child crieth, O Father, not able to shew what it needs, as Moses at the Red Sea.

These stirrings of spirit touch the bowels of God, and melt him into compassion towards us, when they come from the spirit of adoption, and from a striving to be better.

Oh, but is it possible, thinketh the misgiving heart, that so holy a God should accept such a prayer?

Yes, he will accept that which is his own, and pardon that which is ours. *Jonas prayed in the whale's belly*, Jonah ii. 1, being burthened with the

guilt of sin, yet God heareth him: let not therefore infirmities discourage us. Saint James takes away this objection.

Some might object, if I were as holy as Elias, then my prayers might be regarded: but, saith he, *Elias was a man of like passions to us*, James v. 17, he had his passions as well as we; for do we think that God heard him because he was without fault? No surely. But look we to the promises; *call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee*, Psalm l. 15; *Ask and ye shall receive*, Matt. vii. 7, and such like: God accepteth our prayers though weak; 1. Because we are his own children, they come from his own spirit; 2. Because they are according to his own will; 3. Because they are offered in Christ's mediation, and he takes them, and *mingleth them with* his own *odours;* Rev. viii. 3. There is never a holy sigh, never a tear we shed, lost. And as every grace increaseth by exercise of itself, so doth the grace of prayer; by prayer we learn to pray. So likewise we should take heed of a spirit of discouragement in all other holy duties, since we have so gracious a Saviour. Pray as we are able, hear as we are able, strive as we are able, do as we are able, according to the measure of grace received; God in Christ will cast a gracious eye upon that which is his own. Would Saint Paul do nothing, because *he could not do the good he would?* Phil. iii. 14. Yes, *he pressed to the mark.* Let us not be cruel to ourselves when Christ is thus gracious.

There is a certain meekness of spirit, whereby we yield thanks to God for any ability at all, and rest quiet with the measure of grace received, seeing it is God's good pleasure it should be so, who giveth the

will and the deed; yet so as we rest not from further endeavours. But, when upon faithful endeavour we come short of that we would be, and short of that others are, then know for our comfort, Christ will not quench the smoking flax; and that sincerity and truth, as before was said, with endeavour of growth, is our perfection. It is comfortable what God saith, 1 *Kings* xiv. 13. *He only shall go to his grave in peace, because there is some goodness;* though but some goodness: *Lord, I believe*, Mark ix. 24, with a weak faith, yet with faith; love thee with a faint love, yet with love; endeavour in a feeble manner, yet endeavour; a little fire is fire, though it smoketh. Since thou hast taken me into thy covenant to be thine of an enemy, wilt thou cast me off for these infirmities, which as they displease thee so are they the grief of my own heart?

CHAP. XIV.

The case of Indisposition resolved, and Discouragements.

FROM what hath been spoken, with some little addition, it will not be difficult to resolve that case which some require help in, namely, whether we ought to perform duties, our hearts being altogether indisposed. For satisfaction we must know, 1. Our hearts of themselves do linger after liberty, and are hardly brought under the yoke of duty; and the more spiritual the duty is, the more is their untowardness. Corruption getteth ground, for the most part, in every neglect; it is as in rowing against the tide, one stroke neglected will not be gained in three; and therefore it is good to keep our hearts close to duty,

and not to hearken unto the excuses they are ready to frame.

In the setting upon duty, God strengtheneth his own party that he hath in us: we find a warmness of heart, and increase of strength, the Spirit going along with us, and raising us up by degrees, until it leaveth us as it were in heaven. God often delighteth to take the advantage of our indisposition, that he may manifest his work the more clearly; and that all the glory of the work may be his, whose all the strength is.

Obedience is most direct when there is nothing else to sweeten the action; although the *sacrifice* be imperfect, yet the *obedience*, with which it is offered, hath acceptance.

That which is won as a spoil from our corruptions, will have such a degree of comfort afterwards, as for the present it hath of cumber. Feeling and freeness of spirit is oft reserved until duty be discharged: reward followeth work. In and after duty we find that experience of God's presence, which without obedience we may long wait for, and yet go without. This hindereth not the spirit's freedom in *blowing* upon our souls *when it listeth*, John iii. 8. For we speak only of such a state of soul as is becalmed, and must row, as it were, against the stream. As in sailing, the hand must be to the stern, and the eye to the star: so here, put forth that little strength we have to duty, and look up for assistance, which the spirit as freely, so seasonably will afford.

Yet in these duties, that require as well the body as the soul, there may be a cessation till strength be repaired: whetting doth not let but fit. 2. In sudden passions there should be a time to compose and calm

the soul, and to put the strings in tune: the prophet would have a minstrel to bring his soul into frame.

So likewise we are subject to discouragements in suffering, by reason of impatiency in us: alas, I shall never get through such a cross! But if God bring us into the cross, he will be with us in the cross; and at length bring us out *more refined;* we shall lose nothing but *dross*, Zech. xiii. 9. Of our own strength we cannot bear the least trouble, and by the Spirit's assistance we can bear the greatest: the Spirit will join his shoulders to help us to bear our infirmities. *The Lord will put his hand to heave us up*, Psalm xxxvii. 24. *You have heard of the patience of Job*, saith *James*, chap. v. 11, we have heard likewise of his impatiency too: but it pleased God mercifully to overlook that. It yields us comfort also in desolate conditions, as contagious sicknesses, and the like, wherein we are more immediately under God's hand. Then Christ hath a throne of mercy at our bed's side, and numbers our tears and our groans. And, to come to the matter we are now about, the *sacrament* it was ordained not for angels, but for men; and not for perfect men, but for weak men; and not for Christ, who is truth itself, to bind him, but because we are ready by reason of our guilty and unbelieving hearts to call truth itself into question: therefore it was not enough for his goodness to leave us *many precious promises*, but he giveth us seals to strengthen us: and, what though we are not so prepared as we should, yet let us pray as Hezekiah did: *The Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary*, 2 Chron. xxx. 19. Then we come comfortably to this holy sacrament, and with much fruit. This should carry us

through all duties with much cheerfulness, that, if we hate our corruptions, and strive against them, they shall not be counted ours. *It is not I*, saith Saint Paul, *but sin that dwelleth in me*, Rom. vii. 17; for what displeaseth us shall never hurt us, and we shall be esteemed of God to be that we love, and desire, and labour to be; what we desire to be, we shall be; and what we desire truly to conquer, we shall conquer; for *God will fulfil the desire of them that fear him*, Psalm cxlv. 19; the desire is as earnest of the thing desired. How little encouragement will carry us to the affairs of this life? and yet all the helps God offers will hardly prevail with our backward natures. Whence are then discouragements? 1. Not from the Father, for he hath bound himself in covenant *to pity us as a father pitieth his children*, Psalm ciii. 13; and to accept as a father our weak endeavours; and what is wanting in the strength of duty, he giveth us leave to take up in his gracious indulgence, whereby we shall honour that grace wherein he delights, as much as in more perfect performances.

2. Not from Christ, for he by office will not quench the smoking flax. We see how Christ bestoweth the best fruits of his love upon persons, for condition mean, for parts weak, for infirmities, nay, for grosser falls, offensive; first, thus it pleaseth him to confound the pride of flesh, which usually taketh measure of God's love by some outward excellency. Secondly, thus he is delighted to shew the freedom of his grace and his prerogative royal, that *whosoever glorieth, may glory in the Lord.*

In the eleventh to the Hebrews, among that cloud of witnesses, we see Rahab, Gedeon, and Samson, ranked with Abraham the father of the faithful. Our blessed Saviour as he was the image of his

Father, so in this he was of the same mind, glorifying his Father for *revealing* the mystery of the Gospel to *simple men*, neglecting those that carried the chief reputation of *wisdom* in the *world*. Heb. xi, 31, 32.

It is not unworthy of the remembering that which Saint Augustine speaketh of a silly man in his time, destitute almost altogether of the use of reason, who when he was most patient of all injuries done to himself; yet, from a reverence of religion he would not endure any injury done to the name of Christ; in so much that he would cast stones at those that blasphemed, and would not in that case spare his own governors; which sheweth that the parts of none are so low, as that they are beneath the gracious regard of Christ; where it pleaseth him to make his choice, and to exalt his mercy he passeth by no degree of wit, though never so plain.

3. Neither do discouragements come from the *Spirit, he helps our infirmities*, and by office is a *Comforter*, Rom. viii. 26. If he convinceth of sin, and so humbleth us, it is that he may make way to shew his office of *comforting us*. Discouragements, then, must come from ourselves and Satan, who laboureth to fasten on us a loathing of duty.

CHAP. XV.

Of Infirmities. No cause of Discouragement. In whom they are. And how to recover Peace lost.

AND among other causes of discouragement, some are much vexed with scruples, even against the best duties; partly by distemper of body, helped by Satan's malice, casting dust in their eyes, in their way

to heaven; and partly from some remainder of ignorance, which like darkness breedeth fears; and as ignorance of other things, so especially of this merciful disposition in Christ; the persuasion of which would easily banish false fears: they conceive of him as one sitting at a catch for all advantages against them; wherein they may see how they wrong not only themselves but his goodness. This scrupulosity, for the most part, is a sign of a godly soul, as some weeds are of a good soil: therefore are they the more to be pitied, for it is a heavy affliction, and the ground of it in most is not so much from trouble of conscience, as from sickness of fantasy: the end of Christ's coming was to free us from all such groundless fears.

There is still in some such ignorance of that comfortable condition we are in under the covenant of grace; as by it they are much discouraged. Therefore we must know, 1. that weaknesses do not break covenant with God: they do not between husband and wife; and shall we make ourselves more pitiful than Christ, who maketh himself a pattern of love to all other husbands?

2. Weaknesses do not debar us from mercy, nay, they incline God the more. Mercy is a part of the Church's jointure, *Christ marries her in mercy*, Psalm lxxviii. 39. The husband is bound to bear with the wife, as *being the weaker vessel*, Hos. ii. 19; and shall we think he will exempt himself from his own rule, and not bear with his weak spouse?

3. If Christ should not be merciful to our infirmities, he should not have a people to serve him.

Put case therefore we be very weak, yet so long as we are not found amongst malicious opposers and

underminers of God's truth, let us not give way to despairing thoughts: we have a merciful Saviour. But lest we flatter ourselves without ground, we must know that weaknesses are accounted either, 1. Imperfections cleaving to our best actions; or, 2. Such actions as proceed from want of age in Christ, whilst we are babes; or, 3. From want of strength, where there hath been little means; or, 4. They are sudden indeliberate breakings out, contrary to our general bent and purpose, whilst our judgment is overcast with the cloud of a sudden temptation. After which, 1. We are sensible of our infirmity; 2. We grieve for it; 3. And from grief, complain, and 4. With complaining strive and labour to reform, and in labouring get some ground of our corruption.

Weaknesses so considered, howsoever they be matter of humiliation, and the object of our daily mortification; yet may stand with boldness with God, neither is a good work either extinguished by them, or tainted so far as to lose all acceptance with God. But to plead for an infirmity is more than an infirmity; to allow ourselves in weaknesses is more than a weakness. The justification of evil sealeth up the lips, so that the soul cannot call God Father with that child-like liberty, or enjoy sweet communion with him, until peace be made by shaming ourselves, and renewing our faith. Those that have ever been bruised for sin, if they fall they are soon recovered. Peter was recovered with a gracious look of Christ; David by Abigail's words. Tell a thief or a vagrant that he is out of the way, he regards it not, because his aim is not to walk in any certain way, but as it serveth his own turn.

For the further clearing of this, we must conceive,

1. That wheresoever sins of infirmity are, there in that person must be the life of grace begun. There can be no weakness, where there is no life. 2. There must be a sincere and general bent to the best things; though for a sudden a godly man be drawn or driven aside in some particulars, yet by reason of that interest the Spirit of Christ hath in him, and because his aims are right for the main, he will either recover of himself, or yield to the counsel of others. 3. There must be a right judgment allowing of the best ways, or else the heart is rotten, and infuseth corruption into the whole conversation, so that all their actions become infected at the spring-head; they justify looseness, and condemn God's ways, as too much strictness; their principles whereby they work are not good. 4. There must be a conjugal love to Christ, so as upon no terms they will change their Lord and husband, and yield themselves absolutely over to be ruled by their own lusts, or the lusts of others.

A Christian's carriage towards Christ may in many things be very offensive, and cause some strangeness: yet he will own Christ, and Christ him; he will not resolve upon any way wherein he knows he must break with Christ.

Where the heart is thus in these respects qualified, there we must know this, that Christ counteth it his honour to pass by many infirmities, nay, in infirmities he perfiteth his strength. There be some, almost, invincible infirmities, as forgetfulness, heaviness of spirit, sudden passions, fears, &c. which though natural, yet are for the most part tainted with sin; of these, if the life of Christ be in us, we are weary, and would fain shake them off as a sick man his ague; otherwise it is not to be esteemed weakness so

much as wilfulness, and the more *will*, the more sin: and little sins, when God shall awake the conscience, and *set them in order before us*, Ps. l. 21, will prove great burthens, and not only bruise a reed, but shake a cedar. Yet God's children never sin with full will, because there is a contrary law of the mind, whereby the dominion of sin is broken, which always hath some secret working against the law of sin. Notwithstanding there may be so much *will* in a sinful action, as may wonderfully waste our comfort afterward, and keep us long upon the rack of a disquieted conscience, God in his fatherly dispensation suspending the sense of his love. So much as we give way to our will in sinning, in such a measure of distance we set ourselves from comfort. Sin against conscience is as a thief in the candle, which wasteth our *joy*, and thereby weakeneth our *strength*. We must know, therefore, that wilful breaches in sanctification, will much hinder the sense of our justification.

What course shall such take to recover their peace?

Such must give a sharp sentence against themselves, and yet cast themselves upon God's mercy in Christ, as at their first conversion. And now they had need to clasp about Christ the faster, as they see more need in themselves, and let them remember the mildness of Christ here, that will not quench the smoking flax. Ofttimes we see that after a deep humiliation, Christ speaks more peace, than before, to witness the truth of this reconciliation, because he knows Satan's enterprises in casting down such lower; and because such are most abased in themselves, and are ashamed to look Christ in the face, by reason of their unkindness. We see God did not only pardon David, but

after much bruising, gave him wise Solomon to succeed him in the kingdom. We see in the Canticles, chap. vi. 44, that the church after she had been humbled, for her slighting of Christ, Christ sweetly entertains her again, and falleth into commendation of her beauty; we must know for our comfort that Christ was not anointed to this great work of the mediator for lesser sins only, but for the greatest, if we have but a spark of true faith to lay hold on him. Therefore if there be any bruised reed, let him not except himself, when Christ doth not except him; *come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden*, &c. Mat. xi. 28. Why should we not make use of so gracious a disposition? we are only, therefore, poor because we know not our riches in Christ. In time of temptation rather believe Christ, than the devil, believe truth from *truth* itself, hearken not to a liar, an enemy, and a murtherer.

CHAP. XVI.

Satan not to be believed, as he representeth Christ unto us.

SINCE Christ is thus comfortably set out unto us, let us not believe Satan's representations of him. When we are troubled in conscience for our sins, his manner is then to present him to the afflicted soul as a most severe judge armed with justice against us: but then let us present him to our souls, as thus offered to our view by God himself, as holding out a sceptre of mercy, and spreading his arms to receive us. When we think of Joseph, Daniel, John the Evangelist, &c. we frame conceits of them with delight, as of mild and sweet persons; much more when we think of Christ, we should conceive of him as a mirror of all

meekness. If the sweetness of all flowers were in one, how sweet must that flower needs be? In Christ all perfections of mercy and love meet; how great then must that mercy be that lodgeth in so gracious a heart? whatsoever tenderness is scattered in *husband*, *father*, *brother*, *head*, all is but a beam from him, it is in him in the most eminent manner. We are weak, but we are his; we are deformed, but yet carry his image upon us. A father looks not so much at the blemishes of his child, as at his own nature in him; so Christ finds matter of love from that which is his own in us. He sees his own nature in us: we are diseased, but yet his members; who ever neglected his own members, because they were sick or weak? none ever hated his own flesh. Can the head forget the members? can Christ forget himself? we are his fulness as he is ours. He was love itself clothed with man's nature, which he united so near to himself, that he might communicate his goodness the more freely unto us; and took not our nature when it was at the best, but when it was abased, with all natural and common infirmities it was subject unto. Let us therefore abhor all suspicious thoughts, as either cast in, or cherished by that damned spirit, who as he laboured to divide between the father and the son by jealousies, *if thou be the son of God*, &c. Mat. iv. 6. So his daily study is, to divide betwixt the Son and us, by breeding mispersuasions in us of Christ, as if there were not such tender love in him to such as we are. It was his art from the beginning to discredit God with man, by calling God's love into question, with our first father Adam: his success then makes him ready at that weapon still.

But for all this, I feel not Christ so to me, saith the

smoking flax, but rather the clean contrary, he seemeth to be an enemy unto me, I see and feel evidences of his just displeasure.

Christ may act the part of an enemy a little while, as Joseph did, but it is to make way for acting his own part of mercy in a more seasonable time; he cannot hold in his bowels long, he seemeth to wrestle with us, as with Jacob, but he supplies us with hidden strength, at length to get the better. Faith pulls off the vizard from his face, and sees a loving heart under contrary appearances. At first he answers the woman of Canaan, crying after him, not a word; 2. Then gives her a denial; 3. Gives an answer tending to her reproach, calling her dog, as being without the covenant, yet she would not be so beaten off; for she considered the end of his coming. As his Father was never nearer him in strength to support him, than when he was furthest off in sense of favour to comfort him; so Christ is never nearer us in power to uphold us, than when he seemeth most to hide his presence from us. The influence of the *sun* of righteousness pierceth deeper than his light. In such cases whatsoever Christ's present carriage is towards us, let us oppose his nature and office against it, he cannot deny himself, he cannot but discharge the office his Father hath laid upon him. We see here the Father hath undertaken that he shall not *quench the smoking flax;* and Christ again undertaking for us to the Father, appearing before him for us, until he presents us blameless before him, *John* xvii. 6. 11. The Father hath given us to Christ, and Christ giveth us back again to the Father.

This were good comfort, if I were but as smoking flax.

It is well that thy objection pincheth upon thyself, and not upon Christ; it is well thou givest him the honour of his mercy towards others, though not to thyself: but yet do not wrong the work of his spirit in thy heart; Satan as he slandereth Christ to us, so he slandereth us to ourselves. If thou be not so much as smoking flax, then why dost thou not renounce thy interest in Christ, and disclaim the covenant of grace? this thou darest not do; why dost thou not give up thyself wholly to other contents? this thy spirit will not suffer thee. Whence come these restless groanings and complaints? lay this thy present estate, together with this office of Christ to such, and do not despise the consolation of the Almighty, nor refuse thy own mercy. Cast thyself into the arms of Christ, and if thou perishest, perish there; if thou dost not, thou art sure to perish.

If mercy be to be found any where, it is there; herein appears Christ's care to thee, that he hath given thee a heart in some degree sensible: he might have given thee up to hardness, security and profaneness of heart, of all spiritual judgments the greatest. He that died for his enemies, will he refuse those, the desire of whose soul is towards him? he that by his messengers desires us to be reconciled, will he put us off when we earnestly seek it at his hand? No, doubtless, when he prevents us by kindling holy desires in us, he is ready to meet us in his own ways. When the prodigal set himself to return to his father, his father stays not for him, but meets him in the way, *when he prepares the heart to seek, he will cause his ear to hear*, Psalm x. 17. He cannot find in his heart to hide himself long from us. If God should bring us into such a dark condition, as that we should

see no light from himself, or the creature, then let us remember what he saith by the prophet Isaiah, *He that is in darkness, and seeth no light*, Isaiah l. 10, no light of comfort, no light of God's countenance, *yet let him trust in the name of the Lord.* We can never be in such a condition, wherein there will be just cause of utter despair; therefore let us do as mariners do, cast anchor in the dark. Christ knows how to pity us in his case; look what comfort he felt from his Father *in his breakings*, Isaiah liii. 5, the like we shall feel from himself in our bruising.

The sighs of a bruised heart carry in them some report, as of our affection to Christ so of his care to us. The eyes of our souls cannot be toward him, but that he hath cast a gracious look upon us first; the least love we have to him is but a reflection of his love first shining upon us. As Christ did in his example whatsoever he gives us in charge to do, so he suffered in his own person whatsoever he calleth us to suffer, that he might the better learn to relieve and pity us in our sufferings. In his desertion in the garden, and upon the cross, he was content to want that unspeakable solace in the presence of his Father, both to bear the wrath of the Lord for a time for us, and likewise to know the better how to comfort us in our greatest extremities; God seeth it fit we should taste of that cup of which his Son drank so deep, that we might feel a little what sin is, and what his Son's love was; but our comfort is, that Christ drank the dregs of the cup for us, and will succour us, that our spirits utterly fail not under that little taste of his displeasure which we may feel. He became not only a man, but a curse, a man of sorrows for us; he was broken, that we should not be broken; he was troubled,

that we should not be desperately troubled; he became a curse, that we should not be accursed. Whatsoever may be wished for in an all-sufficient comforter is all to be found in Christ. 1. Authority, from the Father all power was given him. 2. Strength in himself, as having his name *the mighty* God, Isaiah ix. 6. 3. Wisdom, and that from his own experience how and when to help. 4. Willingness, as being flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone.

CHAP. XVII.

Reproof of such as sin against this merciful disposition in Christ. Of quenching the Spirit.

WE are now to take notice of divers sorts of men that offend deeply against this merciful disposition of Christ: as, 1. Such as go on in all ill courses of life upon this conceit, as if it were in vain to go to Christ, their lives have been so ill: when as so soon as we look to heaven, all encouragements are ready to meet us, and draw us forward. Amongst others this is one allurement, that Christ is ready to welcome us, and lead us further. None are damned in the church but those that will. Such as either enforce upon themselves hard conceits of Christ, that they may have some shew of reason to fetch contentment from other things: as that *unprofitable servant*, Mat. xxv. 30, that would needs take up a conceit, that his master was *a hard man*; hereby to flatter himself in his unfruitful courses, in not *improving* that *talent* which he had.

2. Such as take up a hope of their own, that Christ will suffer them to walk in the ways to hell, and yet bring them to heaven: whereas all comfort should

draw us nearer to Christ, else it is a lying comfort, either in itself or in our application of it.

And 3. Those that will cast water themselves upon those sparks which Christ labours to kindle in them, because they will not be troubled with the light of them.

Such must know that the Lamb can be angry, and they that will not come under his *sceptre of mercy*, shall be crushed in pieces by his *sceptre of power*, Psalm ii. 9. Though he will graciously tender and maintain the least spark of true grace, yet where he findeth not a spark of grace, but opposition to his spirit striving with them, his wrath once kindled shall burn to hell. There is no juster provocation than when kindness is churlishly refused.

When God would have *cured Babylon, and she would not be cured*, then *she was given up to destruction*, Jer. li. 9.

When *Jerusalem would not be gathered under the wing of Christ*, then *their habitation is left desolate*, Mat. xxiii. 37, 38.

When *Wisdom stretcheth out her hand and men refuse*, then *Wisdom will laugh at men's destruction*, Prov. i. 26. Salvation itself will not save those that spill the potion, and cast away the plaster. A pitiful case, when this merciful Saviour shall delight in destruction: when he that made men shall have no mercy on them, *Isai.* xxvii. 11.

O, say the rebels of the time, God hath not made us to damn us. Yes, if you will not meet Christ in the ways of his mercy, it is fit you should *eat the fruit of your own ways, and be filled with your own devices*, Prov. i. 31.

This will be the hell of hell, when men shall think,

that they have loved their sins more than their souls; when they shall think, what love and mercy hath been almost enforced upon them, and yet they would perish. The more accessary we are in pulling a judgment upon ourselves, the more the conscience will be confounded in itself, when they shall acknowledge Christ to be without all blame, themselves without excuse.

If men appeal to their own consciences, they will tell them, the Holy Spirit hath often knocked at their hearts, as willing to have kindled some holy desires in them. How else can they be said to resist the Holy Ghost, but that the Spirit was readier to draw them to a further degree of goodness than stood with their own wills? whereupon those in the Church that are damned are self-condemned before. So that here we need not rise to higher causes, when men carry sufficient cause in their own bosoms.

4. And the best of us all may offend against this merciful disposition, if we be not watchful against that liberty our carnal dispositions will be ready to take from it. Thus we reason; Christ will not quench the smoking flax, what need we fear that any neglect on our part can bring us under a comfortless condition? If Christ will not do it, what can?

Answ. You know the apostle's prohibition notwithstanding, 1 Thess. v. 19, *Quench not the spirit.* These cautions of not quenching are sanctified by the spirit as means of not quenching. Christ performeth his office in not quenching, by stirring up suitable endeavours in us; and none more solicitous in the use of the means than those that are most certain of the good success. The ground is this: the means that God hath set apart for the effecting of any thing, fall under the same purpose that he hath to bring that

thing to pass; and this is a principle taken for granted, even in civil matters; as, who, if he knew before it would be a fruitful year, would therefore hang up his plough and neglect tillage?

Hence the apostle stirs up from the certain expectation of a blessing, 1 *Cor.* 16; and this encouragement here from the good issue of final victory is intended to stir us up, and not to take us off: if we be negligent in the exercise of grace received, and use of means prescribed, suffering our spirits to be oppressed with multitudes and variety of cares of this life, and take not heed of the damps of the times, for such miscarriage God in his wise care suffereth us oft to fall into a worse condition for feeling, than those that were never so much enlightened; yet in mercy he will not suffer us to be so far enemies to ourselves, as wholly to neglect these sparks once kindled. Were it possible that we should be given up to give over all endeavour wholly, then we could look for no other issue but quenching; but Christ will tend this *spark*, and cherish this small *seed*, so as he will preserve in the soul always some degree of care. If we would make a comfortable use of this, we must consider all those means whereby Christ doth preserve grace begun; as first, holy communion, whereby one Christian heateth another: *two are better than one*, &c. Eccles. iv. 9. *Did not our hearts burn?* Luke xxiv. 32, said the disciples. Secondly, much communion with God in holy duties, as meditation and prayer, which doth not only kindle, but addeth to a lustre to the soul. Thirdly, we feel by experience the breath of the spirit to go along with the ministerial breath, whereupon the apostle knits these two together: *quench not the Spirit: despise not*

prophecies, 1 Thess. v. 19, 20. Nathan by a few words blew up the decaying sparks in David. Rather than God will suffer his fire in us to die, he will send some Nathan or other, and something always is left in us to join with the word as connatural to it; as a coal that hath fire in it will quickly catch more to it: smoking flax will easily take fire. Fourthly, grace is strengthened by the exercise of it: *up and be doing, and the Lord be with thee*, said David to his son Solomon: stir up the grace that is in thee, for so holy motions turn to resolutions, resolutions to practice, and practice to a prepared *readiness to every good work*, 1 Chron. xxii. 17.

Yet let us know that grace is increased in the exercise of it, not by virtue of the exercise itself, but as Christ by his spirit floweth into the soul, and bringeth us nearer unto himself the fountain, and instilleth such comfort in the act, whereby the heart is further enlarged. The heart of a Christian is Christ's garden, and his graces are as so many sweet spices and flowers, which his spirit blowing upon makes them to send forth a sweet savour: therefore keep the soul open for entertainment of the Holy Ghost, for he will bring in continually fresh forces to subdue corruption, and this most of all on the Lord's day. John was in the spirit on the Lord's day, even in Patmos, the place of his banishment, *Rev.* i. 10; then the gales of the spirit blow more strongly and sweetly. As we look, therefore, for the comfort of this doctrine, let us not favour our natural sloth, *but exercise ourselves to godliness*, 1 Tim. iv. 7, and labour to keep this fire always burning upon the altar of our hearts, and dress our lamps daily, and put in fresh oil, and wind up our souls higher and higher

still: resting in a good condition is contrary to grace, which cannot but promote itself to a further measure: let none turn this *grace into wantonness*, Jude 4. Infirmities are a ground of humility, not a plea for negligence, not an encouragement to presumption. We should be so far from *being ill*, because Christ is *good*, as that those *coals* of love should melt us; therefore those may well suspect themselves in whom the consideration of this mildness of Christ doth not work that way: surely where grace is, corruption is as *smoke to their eyes, and vinegar to their teeth*, Prov. x. 29. And therefore they will labour in regard of their own comfort, as likewise for the credit of religion, and the glory of God, that their light may break forth. If a spark of faith or love be so precious, what an honour will it be to be rich in faith? Who would not rather walk in the light, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, than to live in a dark perplexed estate? and not rather be carried with full sail to heaven, than be tossed always with fears and doubts? The present trouble in conflict against a sin is not so much as that disquiet which any corruption favoured will bring upon us afterward: true peace is in conquering, not in yielding. The comfort in this text intended is for those that would fain do better, but find their corruptions clog them; that are in such a mist, that ofttimes they cannot tell what to think of themselves; that fain would believe, and yet oft fear they do not believe, and think that it cannot be that God should be so good to such sinful wretches as they are; and yet they allow not themselves in these fears and doubts.

And among others, how do they wrong themselves and him, that will have other mediators to God for

them than he? Are any more pitiful than he, who became man to that end, that he might be pitiful to his own flesh? Let all at all times repair to this meek Saviour, and put up all our suits in his prevailing name. What need we knock at any other door? can any be more tender over us than Christ? What encouragement have we to commend the state of the Church in general, or of any broken-hearted Christian, unto him by our prayers? Of whom we may speak unto Christ, as they of Lazarus, *Lord*, the Church *which thou lovest*, and gavest thyself for, is in distress: Lord, this poor Christian, for whom thou *wert bruised*, Isai. liii. 5, is bruised and brought very low. It cannot but touch his bowels when the misery of his own dear bowels is spread before him.

Again, considering this gracious nature in Christ, let us think with ourselves thus: when he is so kind unto us, shall we be cruel against him in his name, in his truth, in his children? how shall those that delight to be so terrible *to the meek of the earth*, Zech. ii. 3, hope to look so gracious a Saviour in the face? they that are so boisterous towards his *spouse*, shall know one day they had to deal with himself in his Church. So it cannot but cut the heart of those that have felt this love of Christ, to hear him wounded who is the life of their lives, and the soul of their souls: this maketh those that have felt mercy weep over Christ whom they have pierced with their sins; there cannot but be a mutual and quick sympathy between the *head* and the *members*. When we are tempted to any sin, if we will not pity ourselves, yet we should spare Christ, in not putting him to new torments. The apostle could not find out a more heart-breaking argument to enforce a sacrificing our-

selves to God, than to conjure us by the mercies of God in Christ.

This mercy of Christ likewise should move us to commiserate the state of the poor Church, torn by enemies without, and renting itself by divisions at home. It cannot but work upon any soul that ever felt comfort from Christ, to consider what an affectionate intreaty the apostle useth to mutual agreement in judgment and affection. *If any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil my joy, be like-minded*, Phil. ii. 1: as if he should say, unless you will disclaim all consolation in Christ, &c. labour to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. What a joyful spectacle is this to Satan and his faction, to see those that are separated from the world fall in pieces among themselves! Our discord is our enemy's melody.

The more to blame those that for private aims affect differences from others, and will not suffer the wounds of the Church to close and meet together. Which must not be understood, as if men should dissemble their judgment in any truth where there is just cause of expressing themselves; for the least truth is Christ's and not ours, and therefore we are not to take liberty to affirm or deny at our pleasures: there is a due in a penny as well as in a pound, therefore we must be faithful in the least truth; when season calleth for it, then our *words are like apples of gold with pictures of silver*. One word spoken in season will do more good than a thousand out of season. But in some cases peace, by *keeping our faith to ourselves*, Rom. xiv. 22, is of more consequence than the open discovery of some things we take to be true; considering

the weakness of man's nature is such, that there can hardly be a discovery of any difference in opinion, without some estrangement of affection. So far as men are not of one mind, they will hardly be of one heart, except where grace and the *peace of God*, Col. iii. 15, bear great rule in the heart: therefore open show of difference is never good but when it is necessary; howsoever some, from a desire to be somebody, turn into by-ways, and yield to a spirit of contradiction in themselves; yet, if St. Paul may be judge, *are they not carnal?* 1 Cor. iii. 3; if it be wisdom, it is wisdom from beneath; for the wisdom from above, as it is *pure*, so it is *peaceable*, Jam. iii. 17. Our blessed Saviour, when he was to leave the world, what doth he press upon his disciples more than peace and love? And in his last prayer with what earnestness did he beg of his Father that *they might be one, as he and the Father were one?* John xvii. 21. But what he prayed for on earth, we shall only enjoy perfectly in heaven. Let this make the meditation of that time the more sweet unto us.

And further to lay open offenders in this kind, what spirit shall we think them to be of, that take advantages of the bruisedness and infirmities of men's spirits to relieve them with false peace for their own worldly ends? A wounded spirit will part with any thing. Most of the gainful points of popery, as confession, satisfaction, merit, purgatory, &c. spring from hence, but they are physicians of no value, or rather tormentors than physicians at all. It is a greater blessing to be delivered from the *sting of these scorpions* than we are thankful for. Spiritual tyranny is the greatest tyranny, and then especially when it is where most mercy should be shewed; yet even there some,

like cruel surgeons, delight in making long cures, to serve themselves upon the misery of others. It bringeth men under a terrible curse, *when they will not remember to shew mercy, but persecute the poor and needy man, that they might even slay the broken in heart*, Psalm cix. 16.

Likewise to such as raise temporal advantage to themselves out of the spiritual misery of others: join such as raise estates by betraying the Church, and are unfaithful in the trust committed unto them: when the children shall cry for the bread of life, and there is none to give them, bringing thus upon the people of God that heavy judgment of a spiritual famine, starving Christ in his members. Shall we so requite so good a Saviour, who counteth the love and mercy shewed *in feeding his lambs*, John xxi. 15, as shewed to himself?

Last of all, they carry themselves very unkindly towards Christ, who stumble at this his low stooping unto us in his *government* and *ordinances*, that are *ashamed* of the simplicity of *the gospel*, that count preaching foolishness.

They out of the pride of their heart think they may do well enough without the help of the *word* and *sacraments;* and think Christ took not state enough upon him, and therefore they will mend the matter with their own devices, whereby they may give the better content to flesh and blood, as in popery. What greater unthankfulness can there be than to despise any help that Christ in mercy hath provided for us? In the days of his flesh, the proud Pharisees took offence at his familiar conversing with sinful men, who only did so as a physician to heal their souls. What defences was St. Paul driven to make for him-

self, for his plainness in unfolding the gospel? The more Christ in himself and in his servants shall descend to exalt us, the more we should with all humility and readiness entertain that love, and magnify the goodness of God that hath put the great work of our salvation, and laid the government upon so gentle a Saviour, that will carry himself so mildly in all things wherein he is to deal betwixt God and us, and us and God. The lower Christ comes down to us, the higher let us lift him up in our hearts: so will all those do that have ever found the experience of Christ's work in their heart.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of Christ's judgment in us, and his victory. What it is.

WE come to the third part, the constant progress of Christ's gracious power, until he hath set up such an absolute government in us which shall prevail over all corruptions. It is said here, he will cherish his beginnings of grace in us, until he bring forth *judgment unto victory*. By *judgment* here is meant the kingdom of grace in us, that government whereby Christ sets up a throne in our hearts. *Governors* among the Jews were first called *judges*, then *kings*: whence this inward rule is called *judgment*; as likewise, because it agrees unto the judgment of the word, which the psalmist oft calleth *judgment*, Psalm lxxii. 1, 2, because it agreeth to God's judgment: men may read their doom in God's word, what it judgeth of them God judgeth of them. By this judgment set up in us, good is discerned, allowed, and performed; sin is judged, condemned, and exe-

cuted. Our spirit being under the spirit of Christ, is governed by him, and so far as it is governed by Christ it governs us graciously.

Christ and we are of one judgment and of one will; he hath his will in us, and his judgments are so invested into us, as that they are turned into our judgment, we carrying *his law in our hearts, written by his Spirit*, Jer. xxxi. 33: the law in the inner man and the law written answer as counterpanes each other.

The meaning then is, that the gracious frame of holiness set up in our hearts by the spirit of Christ, shall go forward until all contrary power be brought under. The spirit of judgment will *be a spirit of burning*, Isaiah iv. 4, to consume whatsoever opposed corruption like rust eats into the soul. If God's builders fall into errors, and *build stubble* upon a good foundation, God's spirit as a spiritual *fire will reveal this in time*, 1 Cor. iii. 13, and waste it: they shall by a spirit of judgment condemn their own errors and courses. The whole work of grace in us is set out under the name of judgment, and sometimes wisdom, because judgment is the chief and leading part in grace; whereupon that gracious work of repentance is called a change of the mind, and an after-wisdom. As on the other side, in the learned languages, the words that do express wisdom imply likewise the general relish and savour of the whole soul: and rather more the judgment of taste, than of sight, or any other sense, because taste is the most necessary sense, and requireth the nearest application of the object of all other senses. So in spiritual life, it is most necessary that the spirit should alter the taste of the soul, so as that it might savour the things of

the spirit so deeply, that all other things should be out of relish.

And as it is true of every particular Christian, that Christ's judgment in him shall be victorious, so likewise of the whole body of Christians, *the Church*. The government of Christ, and his truth, whereby he ruleth as by a sceptre, shall at length be victorious in spite of Satan, Antichrist, and all enemies. Christ *riding on his white horse*, Rev. vi. 2, hath *a bow*, and goeth forth *conquering*, Rev. xix. 11, in the ministry, that he may overcome either to conversion or to confusion. But yet I take judgment for Christ's kingdom and government within us principally. 1. Besides God especially requireth the subjection of the soul and conscience as his proper throne. 2. Because if judgment should prevail in all other about us and not in our own hearts, it would not yield comfort to us; hereupon it is the first thing that we desire when we pray, *Thy kingdom come*, that Christ would come and rule in our hearts: the kingdom of Christ in his ordinances serves but to bring Christ home into his own place, our hearts.

The words being thus explained, that judgment here includeth the government of both mind, will, and affections, there are divers conclusions that naturally do spring from them.

CHAP. XIX.

Christ is so mild that yet he will govern those that enjoy the comfort of his mildness.

THE first conclusion from the connexion of this part of the verse with the former is, that Christ is upon those terms mild, so that he will set up his government in those whom he is so gentle and tender over. He so pardons as he will be obeyed as a king; he so taketh us to be his spouse, as he will be obeyed as a husband; the same spirit that convinceth us of the necessity of his righteousness to cover us convinceth us also of the necessity of his government to rule us. His love to us moveth him to frame us to be like himself, and our love to him stirreth us up to be such as he may take delight in, neither have we any more faith or hope than care to be purged as he is pure; he maketh us subordinate governors, yea, kings under himself, giving us grace not only to set against, but to subdue in some measure our base affections. It is one main fruit of Christ's exaltation that he may turn every one of us from our wickedness, Acts iii. 26. *For this end Christ died and rose again and liveth, that he should be Lord of the dead and living*, Rom. xiv. 9. God hath bound himself by an oath that he would grant us, that *without fear we might serve him in holiness and righteousness in his sight*, Luke i. 75, not only in the sight of the world.

1. This may serve for a trial to discern who may lay just claim to Christ's mercy; only those that will take his yoke, and count it a greater happiness to be under his government, than to enjoy any liberty of the flesh; that will take whole Christ, and not single

out of him what may stand with their present contentment; that will not divide Lord from Jesus, and so make a Christ of their own: none ever did truly desire mercy pardoning, but desired mercy healing. David prayeth for a new spirit, as well as for sense of pardoning mercy, *Psalm* li.

2. This sheweth that those are misled, that make Christ to be only righteousness to us, and not sanctification, except by imputation: whereas it is a great part of our happiness to be under such a Lord, who was not only *born* for us, and *given unto us*, but *hath the government likewise upon his shoulders*, Isai. ix. 6, 7, that is our sanctifier as well as our saviour, our saviour as well by the effectual power of his spirit from the power of sin, as by the merit of his death from the guilt thereof; so that this, 1. be remembered, that the first and chief ground of our comfort is, that Christ as a priest offered himself as a sacrifice to his Father for us. The guilty soul flieth first to Christ crucified, made a curse for us. Thence it is that Christ hath right to govern us, thence it is that he giveth us his spirit as our guide to lead us home.

2. In the course of our life, after that we are in state of grace, and be overtaken with any sin, we must remember to have recourse first unto Christ's mercy to pardon us, and then to the promise of his spirit to govern us.

3. And when we feel ourselves cold in affection and duty, it is the best way to warm ourselves at this fire of his love and mercy in giving himself for us.

4. Again, remember this, that Christ as he ruleth us, so it is by a spirit of love from a sense of his love, whereby his commandments are easy to us; he leadeth us by his free spirit, a spirit of liberty: his

subjects are voluntaries; the constraint that he layeth upon his subjects is that of love: he draweth us with the cords of love sweetly. Yet remember withal, that he draweth us strongly by a spirit of power, for it is not sufficient that we have motives and encouragements to love and obey Christ from that love of his, whereby he gave himself for us to justify us; but Christ's spirit must likewise subdue our hearts, and sanctify them to love him, without which all motives would be ineffectual. Our disposition must be changed, we must be new creatures; they seek for heaven in hell that seek for spiritual love in an unchanged heart. When a child obeys his father, it is so from reasons persuading him, as likewise from a child-like nature which giveth strength to these reasons: it is natural for a child of God to love Christ so far as he is renewed, not only from inducement of reason so to do, but likewise from an inward principle and work of grace, whence those reasons have their chief forces; first, we are made partakers of the divine nature, and then we are easily induced and led by Christ's spirit to spiritual duties.

CHAP. XX.

The spiritual Government of Christ is joined with judgment and wisdom.

THE second conclusion is, that Christ's government in his Church and in his children is a wise and well-ordered government, because it is called judgment, and judgment is the life and soul of wisdom. Of this conclusion there are two branches; 1. That the spiritual government of Christ in us is joined with judgment and wisdom. 2. Wheresoever true spiritual wisdom

and judgment is, there likewise the spirit of Christ bringeth in his gracious government. For the first, a well-guided life by the rules of Christ, standeth with the strongest and highest reason of all; and therefore holy men are called the *children of wisdom*, Luke vii. 31, and are able to *justify* both by reason and experience all the ways of wisdom. Opposite courses are *folly and madness*. Hereupon St. Paul saith, that a *spiritual man judgeth all things*, 1. Cor. ii. 15, that appertain to him, *and is judged of none* that are of an inferior rank, because they want spiritual light and sight to judge; yet this sort of men will be judging, *and speaking ill of what they know not*, 2. Pet. ii. 12, they step from ignorance to prejudice and rash censure, without taking right judgment in their way, and therefore their judgment comes to nothing. But the judgment of a spiritual man, so far forth as he is spiritual, shall stand, because it is agreeable to the nature of things: as things are in themselves, so they are in his judgment. As God is in himself infinite in goodness and majesty, &c. so he is to him; he ascribes to God in his heart his divinity and all his excellencies. As Christ is in himself the only mediator, and *all in all* in the Church, *Col.* iii. 11, so he is to him, by making Christ so in his heart. *As all things are dung in comparison of Christ*, Phil. iii. 8, so they are to Paul, a sanctified man. As the very worst thing in religion, *the reproach of Christ is better than the pleasure of sin for a season*, Heb. xi. 26; so it is to Moses, a man of a right *esteem*. *As one day in the courts of God is better than a thousand elsewhere*, Ps. lxxxiv. 10, so it is to David, a man of a reformed judgment. There is a conformity of a good man's judgment to things as they are in

themselves, and according to the difference or agreement put by God in things, so doth his judgment differ or agree.

Truth is truth, and error, error, and that which is unlawful is unlawful, whether men think so or no. God hath put an eternal difference betwixt light and darkness, good and ill, which no creature's conceit can alter; and therefore no man's judgment is the measure of things further than it agrees to truth stamped upon things themselves by God. Hereupon because a wise man's judgment agrees to the truth of things, a wise man may in some sense be said to be the measure of things; and the judgment of one holy wise man to be preferred before a thousand others. Such men usually are immoveable as the sun in its course, because they think, and speak, and live by rule. *A Joshua and his house will serve God*, Josh. xxiv. 15, whatsoever others do, and will run a course contrary to the world, because their judgments lead them a contrary way. Hence it is that Satan hath a spite at the eye of the soul, the judgment, to put out that by ignorance and false reason, for he cannot rule in any until either he hath taken away or perverted judgment: he is a *prince of darkness*, and ruleth in darkness of the understanding. Therefore he must first be cast out of the understanding by the prevailing of truth, and planting it in the soul. Those therefore that are enemies of knowledge help Satan and antichrist, whose kingdom like Satan's is a kingdom of darkness, to erect their throne. Hence it is promised by Christ, that the *Holy Ghost shall convince the world of judgment*, John xvi. 8; that is, that he is resolved to set up a throne of government, because the great lord of misrule, *Satan, the prince of the world*,

is judged by the Gospel, and the spirit accompanying it, his impostures are discovered, his enterprizes laid open; therefore when the Gospel was spread, the oracles ceased, *Satan fell from heaven like lightning*, Luke x. 18, men were *translated out of his kingdom into Christ's*, Col. i. 13. Where prevailing is by lies, there discovery is victory: *they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest to all*, 2 Tim. iii. 9. So that manifestation of error giveth a stop to it, for none will willingly be deceived. Let truth have full scope without check or restraint, and let Satan and his instruments do their worst, they shall not prevail; as Jerome saith of the Pelagians in his time. The discovery of your opinions is the vanquishing of them, your blasphemies appear at the first blush.

Hence we learn the necessity, that the understanding be principled with supernatural knowledge for the well managing of a Christian conversation.

There must be light to discover a further end than nature, for which we are Christians, and a rule suitable directing to that end, which is the will of God in Christ, discovering his *good* pleasure toward us, and our duty towards him; and in virtue of this discovery we do all that we do, that any way may further our reckoning: *The eye must first be single, and then the whole body and frame of our conversation will be light*, Mat. vi. 22: otherwise both we and our course of life are nothing but darkness; the whole conversation of a Christian is nothing else but knowledge digested into will, affection, and practice. If the first concoction in the stomach be not good, that in the liver cannot be good: so if there be error in the judgment, it mars the whole practice, as an error in

the foundation doth the building: God will have *no blind sacrifices, no unreasonable services,* Mal. i. 13, but will have us to *love him with all our mind,* Rom. xii. 1, that is, with our understanding part as well as *with all our hearts,* Luke x. 27, that is, the affecting part of the soul.

This order of Christ's government by judgment is agreeable unto the soul, and God delighteth to preserve the manner of working peculiar unto man, that is, to do what he doth out of judgment: as grace supposeth nature as founded upon it, so the frame of grace preserveth the frame of nature in man. And therefore Christ bringeth all that is good in the soul through judgment, and that so sweetly, that many out of a dangerous error think, that that good which is in them and issueth from them is from themselves, and not from the powerful work of grace. As in *evil,* the devil so subtly leadeth us according to the stream of our own nature, that men think that Satan had no hand in their sin; but here a mistake is with little peril, because we are ill of ourselves, and the devil doth but promote what ill he findeth in us. But here are no seeds of supernatural goodness at all in us. God findeth nothing in us but enmity; only he hath engraven this in our nature to incline in general to that which we judge to be good. Now when he shall clearly discover what is good in particular, we are carried to it; and when convincingly he shall discover that which is ill, we abhor it as freely as we embraced it before.

From whence we may know, when we work as we should do or no, that is, when we do what we do out of *inward principles,* when we fall not upon that which is good, only because we are so bred, or because such

or such whom we respect do so, or because we will maintain a side, so making religion a faction; but out of *judgment*, when what we do that is good, we first judge it in ourselves so to be; and what we abstain from that is ill, we first judge it to be ill from an *inward* judgment. A sound Christian as he enjoyeth the *better part*, so hath first made *choice* of it with *Mary*, *he established all his thoughts by counsel*, Luke x. 42. God indeed useth carnal men to very good service, but without a thorough altering and conviction of their judgment. He worketh by them, but not in them, therefore they do neither approve the good they do, nor hate the evil they abstain from.

CHAP. XXI.

Where true wisdom and judgment is, there Christ sets up his government.

THE second branch is, that wheresoever true wisdom and judgment is, there Christ hath set up his government; because where wisdom is, it directs us not only to understand, but to order our ways aright; where Christ by his spirit as a *prophet teaches*, he likewise as a *king* by his spirit subdueth the heart to obedience of what is taught. This is that teaching which is promised of God when not only the brain, but the heart itself is taught: when men do not only know what they should do, but are taught the very doing of it, they are not only taught that they should love, fear, and obey, but they are taught love itself and fear and *obedience* itself. Christ sets up his chair in the very heart, and alters the frame of that, and makes his subjects good, together with teaching of them to be good. Other princes can

make good laws, but they *cannot write them in their people's hearts*, Jer. xxxii. This is Christ's prerogative, he infuseth into his subjects his own spirit: *upon him there doth not only rest the spirit of wisdom and understanding*, but likewise *the spirit of the fear of the Lord*, Isai. xi. 2. The knowledge which we have of him from himself, is a *transforming* knowledge, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. The same spirit that enlighteneth the mind, inspireth gracious inclinations into the will and affections, and infuseth strength into the whole man. As a gracious man judgeth as he should, so he affecteth and doth as he judgeth, his life is a commentary of his inward man; there is a sweet harmony betwixt God's *truth*, his *judgment*, and his whole *conversation*. The heart of a Christian is like Jerusalem when it was at the best, a city compact within itself; where are *set up the thrones of judgment*, Psalm cxxii. 3: judgment should have a throne in the heart of every Christian. Not that judgment alone will work a change, there must be grace to alter the bent and sway of the will, before it will yield to be wrought upon by the understanding. But God hath so joined these together, as that whensoever he doth savingly shine upon the understanding, he giveth a soft and pliable heart; for without a work upon the heart by the spirit of God, it will follow its own inclination to that which it affecteth, whatsoever the judgment shall say to the contrary: there is no connatural proportion betwixt an unsanctified heart and a sanctified judgment. For the heart unaltered will not give leave to the judgment coldly and soberly to conclude what is best: as the sick man whilst his *aguish* distemper corrupteth his taste, is rather desirous to please *that*, than to hearken what the phy-

sician shall speak. Judgment hath not power over itself where the will is unsubdued, for the will and affections bribe it to give sentence for them, when any profit or pleasure shall come in competition with that which the judgment in general only shall think to be good; and therefore it is for the most part in the power of the heart, what the understanding shall judge and determine in particular things. Where grace hath brought the heart under, there unruly passions do not cast such a mist before the understanding, but that in particular it seeth that which is best; and base respects, springing from self-love, do not alter the case, and bias the judgment into a contrary way; but that which is good in itself shall be good unto us, although it cross our particular worldly interests.

The right conceiving of this hath an influence into practice, which hath drawn me to a more full explanation: this will teach us the right method of godliness, to begin with judgment, and then to beg of God together with illumination, holy inclinations of our will and affections, that so a perfect government may be set up in our hearts, and that our *knowledge may be with all judgment*, Phil. i. 9, that is, with experience and feeling: when the judgment of Christ is set up in our judgments, and thence, by the spirit of Christ, brought into our hearts, then it is in its proper place and throne; and until then, truth doth us no good, but helpeth to condemn us. The life of a Christian is a regular life, and he that *walketh by the rule*, Gal. vi. 16, of the new creature, peace shall be upon him; *he that despiseth his way and loveth to live at large*, seeking all liberty to the flesh, *shall die*, Prov. xix. 16. And it is made good by St. Paul, *If we live after the flesh, we shall die*, Rom. viii. 13.

We learn likewise that men of an ill governed life have no true judgment: no wicked man can be a wise man. And that without Christ's spirit the soul is in confusion, without beauty and form, as all things were in the chaos before the creation. The whole soul is out of joint till it be set in again, by him whose office is *to restore all things*. The baser part of the soul, which should be subject, ruleth all, and keepeth under that little truth that is in the understanding, holding it captive to base affections; and Satan by corruption getteth all the holds of the soul, *till* Christ, stronger than he, cometh, and driveth him out, and taketh possession of all the powers and parts of soul and body, to be *weapons of righteousness, to serve him*, and then new lords new laws, Christ as a new conqueror changeth the fundamental laws of old Adam, and establisheth a government of his own.

CHAP. XXII.

Christ's government is victorious.

THE third conclusion is, that this *government is victorious*. The reasons are:

1. Because Christ hath conquered all in his own person first, and he *is God over all, blessed for evermore;* and therefore over *sin, death, hell, Satan, the world*, &c. Rom. ix. 5. And as he hath overcome them in himself, so he overcomes them in our hearts and consciences. We used to say, conscience maketh a man a king or a caitiff, because it is planted in us to judge for God, either with us, or against us; now if natural conscience be so forcible, what will it be when besides its own light it hath the light of divine truth put into it? It will undoubtedly prevail, either

to make us hold up our heads with boldness, or abase us beneath ourselves. If it subject itself by grace to Christ's truth, then it boldly overlooks *death*, *hell*, *judgment*, and all spiritual enemies, because then Christ sets up his kingdom in the conscience, and makes it a kind of paradise.

The sharpest conflict which the soul hath is between the conscience and God's justice: now if the conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ, hath prevailed over assaults fetched from the justice of God as now satisfied by Christ, it will prevail over all other opposition whatsoever.

2. We are to encounter with accursed and damned enemies; therefore if they begin to fall before the spirit in us, they shall fall: if they rise up again, it is to have the greater fall.

3. The Spirit of truth to whose tuition Christ hath committed his *Church*, and the truth of the Spirit which is the sceptre of Christ, abide for ever; therefore the soul begotten by the immortal seed of the Spirit, 1 *Pet.* i. 23, and this truth, must not only live for ever, but likewise prevail over all that oppose it, for both the word and spirit are *mighty in operation*, Heb. iv. 12; and if the ill spirit be never idle in those whom God delivereth up to him, we cannot think that the Holy Spirit will be idle in those whose leading and government is committed to him. No, as he dwelleth in them, so he will drive out all that rise up against him, until he be all in all.

What is spiritual is eternal; truth is a beam of Christ's spirit, both in itself, and as it is ingrafted into the soul, therefore it, and the grace, though little, wrought by it, will prevail; a little thing in the hand of a giant will do great matters. A little faith strengthened by Christ will work wonders.

4. *To him that hath shall be given,* Mat. xxv. 29; the victory over any corruption or temptation is a pledge of final victory. As Joshua said when he set his foot upon the five kings which he conquered; *Thus God shall do with all our enemies,* Josh. x. 25, heaven is ours already, only we strive till we have full possession.

5. Christ as king brings in a commanding light into the soul, and bows the neck, and softens the iron sinew of the inner man, and where he begins to rule, he rules for ever, *his kingdom hath no end,* Luke i. 33.

6. The end of Christ's coming was to destroy the works of the devil, both for us and in us: and the end of the resurrection was, as to seal unto us the assurance of his victory; so 1. To quicken our souls from death in sin; 2. To free our souls from such snares and sorrows of spiritual death as accompany the guilt of sin; 3. To raise them up more comfortable, as the sun breaks forth more gloriously out of a thick cloud; 4. To raise us out of particular slips, and failings, stronger; 5. To raise us out of all troublesome and dark conditions of this life; and 6. At length to raise our bodies out of the dust. For the same power that the Spirit showed in raising Christ, our *head,* from the sorrows of death, and the lowest degree of his abasement; the same power obtained by the death of Christ from God, now appeased by that sacrifice, will the spirit show in the Church which is his body, and in every particular member thereof.

And this power is conveyed by faith, whereby after union with Christ in both his estates of humiliation and exaltation, we see ourselves not only *dead with Christ,* but *risen and sitting together with him in heavenly places,* Eph. ii. 6. Now we, apprehending

ourselves to be dead and risen, and thereupon victorious over all our enemies in our *head;* and apprehending that his scope in all this is to conform us to himself, we are by this faith *changed into his likeness*, 2 Cor. iii. 18, and so become conquerors over all our spiritual enemies as he is, by that power which we derive from him, who is the storehouse of all spiritual strength for all his: Christ at length will have his end in us, and faith resteth assured of it, and this assurance is very operative, stirring us up to join with Christ in his ends.

And so for the Church in general, by Christ it will have its victory: Christ is that *little stone cut out of the mountain without hands that breaketh in pieces that goodly image*, Dan. ii. 35, that is, all opposite government, until it become *a great mountain, and filleth the whole earth.* So that the stone that was cut out of the mountain, becomes a mountain itself at length. Who art thou, then, O mountain, that thinkest to stand up against this mountain? all shall lie flat and level before it: he will bring down all mountainous high exalted thoughts, and lay the pride of all flesh low. When chaff strives against the wind, stubble against the fire, when the heel kicks against the pricks, when the potsherd strives with the potter, when man strives against God, it is easy to know on which side the victory will go. The winds may toss the ship wherein Christ is, but not overturn it. The waves may dash against the rock, but they do but break themselves against it.

If this be so, why is it thus with the Church of God, and with many a gracious Christian? the victory seemeth to go with the enemy.

For answer, remember, 1. God's children usually

in their troubles overcome by suffering; here lambs overcome lions, and doves, eagles by suffering, that herein they may be conformable to Christ, who conquered most when he suffered most; together with Christ's kingdom of patience there was a kingdom of power.

2. This victory is by degrees, and therefore they are too hasty spirited that would conquer so soon as they strike the first stroke, and be at the end of their race at the first setting forth: the Israelites were sure of victory in their voyage to Canaan, yet they must fight it out. God would not have us presently forget what cruel enemies Christ hath overcome for us; *destroy them not, lest the people forget it*, saith the psalmist, *Psalm* lix. 11. That so by the experience of that annoyance we have by them, we might be kept in fear to come under the power of them.

3. That God often worketh by contraries; when he means to give victory, he will suffer us to be foiled at first; when he means to comfort, he will terrify first; when he means to justify, he will condemn us first; whom he means to make glorious, he will abase first; a Christian conquers, even when he is conquered; when he is conquered by some sins, he gets victory over others more dangerous, *as spiritual pride, security*, &c.

4. That Christ's work both in the Church, and in the hearts of Christians, often goeth backward, that it may go the better forward: as seed rots in the ground in the winter time, but after comes better up; and the harder the winter, the more flourishing the spring; so we learn to stand by falls, and get strength by weakness discovered; we take deeper root by shaking; and as torches flame brighter by moving, thus it

pleaseth Christ, out of his freedom, in this manner to maintain his government in us. Let us herein labour to exercise our faith, that it may answer Christ's manner of carriage towards us: when we are foiled, let us believe we shall overcome; when we are fallen let us believe we shall rise again. Jacob after he had a *blow upon which he halted*, yet *would not give over wrestling*, Gen. xxxii. 24, till he had gotten the *blessing;* so let us never give over, but in our thoughts knit the beginning, progress, and end together, and then we shall see ourselves in heaven out of the reach of all enemies. Let us assure ourselves that God's grace, even in this imperfect estate, is stronger than man's free will in the state of first perfection, being founded now in Christ, who as he is the *author*, so will be *the finisher of our faith*, Heb. xii. 2; we are under a more gracious covenant.

That which some say of faith *rooted*, that it continueth, but weak faith may come to nothing, seemeth to be crossed by this Scripture: for as the strongest faith may be shaken, so the weakest where truth is is so far rooted, that it will prevail. Weakness with watchfulness will stand out, when strength with too much confidence faileth. Weakness with acknowledging of it, is the fittest seat and subject for God to perfect his strength in; for consciousness of our infirmities driveth us out of ourselves to him in whom our strength lieth.

Hereupon it followeth, that weakness may stand with the assurance of salvation; the disciples notwithstanding all their weaknesses, are bidden to *rejoice*, Luke x. 20, that their names are written in heaven. Failings, with conflict, in sanctification should not weaken the peace of our justification, and assurance

of salvation. It mattereth not so much what ill is in us, as what good; not what corruptions, but how we stand affected to them; not what our particular failings be, so much as what is the thread and tenor of our lives: for Christ's mislike of that which is amiss in us, redounds not to the hatred of our persons, but to the victorious subduing of all our infirmities.

Some have after conflict wondered at the goodness of God, that so little and shaking faith should have upheld them in so great combats, when Satan had almost catched them. And indeed it is to be wondered, how much a little grace will prevail with God for acceptance, and over our enemies for victory, if the heart be upright. Such is the goodness of our sweet Saviour, that he delighteth still to shew his strength in our weakness.

First, therefore, for the great consolation of poor and weak Christians, let them know, that a spark from heaven, though kindled under greenwood that sobs and smokes, yet it will consume all at last, *Love* once kindled is *strong as death, much water cannot quench it*, and therefore it is called *a vehement flame*, or *flame of God*, Cant. viii. 6, kindled in the heart by the Holy Ghost: that little that is in us is fed with an everlasting spring. As the *fire* that came down from heaven in Elias his time, 1 *Kings* xviii. 38, licked up all the *water*, to shew that it came from God: so will this *fire* spend all our corruptions, no affliction without, or corruption within, shall quench it. In the morning we see oft clouds gather about the sun, as if they would hide it, but the sun wasteth them by little and little, till it comes to its full strength. At the first, fears and doubts hinder the breaking out of this fire, until at length it gets above them all, and

Christ prevails; and then he backs his own graces in us. Grace conquers us first, and we by it conquer all things else; whether it be corruptions within us, or temptations without us.

The Church of Christ, begotten by the word of truth, hath the doctrine of the apostles for her crown, and tramples *the moon*, that is, the world, and all worldly things, *under her feet*, Rev. xii. 1; *Every one that is born of God overcometh the world*, 1 John v. 4. Faith, whereby especially Christ rules, sets the soul so high, that it overlooks all other things as far below, as having represented to it, by the spirit of Christ, riches, honour, beauty, pleasures of a higher nature.

Now that we may not come short of the comfort intended, there are two things especially to be taken notice of by us; 1. Whether there be such a judgment or government set up in us, to which this promise of victory is made. 2. Some rules or directions how we are to carry ourselves, that the judgment of Christ in us may indeed be victorious.

The evidences whereby we may come to know that Christ's judgment in us is such as will be victorious are, 1. If we be able from experience to justify all Christ's ways, let flesh and blood say what it can to the contrary, and can willingly subscribe to that course which God hath taken in Christ, to bring us to heaven, and still approve a further measure of grace than we have attained unto, and project and forecast for it. No other men can justify their courses, when their conscience is awaked. 2. When reasons of religion be the strongest reasons with us, and prevail more than reasons fetched from worldly policy. 3. When we are so true to our ends and fast to our rule, as no hopes or fears can sway us another way, but still we

are looking what agrees or differs from our rule. 4. When we *can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*, 2 Cor. xiii. 8, as being dearer to us than our lives; truth hath not this sovereignty in the heart of any carnal man. 5. When if we had liberty to choose under whose government we would live, yet out of a delight in the inner man to Christ's government, we would make choice of him only to rule us before any other, for this argues, that we are like minded to Christ, a free and *a voluntary people*, and not compelled unto Christ's service, otherwise than by the sweet constraint of love. When we are so far in liking with the government of Christ's spirit, that we are willing to resign up ourselves to him in all things, for then his kingdom is come into us, when our wills are brought to his will; it is the bent of our wills that maketh us good or ill.

6. A well ordered uniform life, not by fits or starts, shews a well ordered heart, as in a clock when the hammer strikes well, and the hand of the dial points well, it is a sign that the wheels are right set. 7. When Christ's will cometh in competition with any earthly loss or gain, yet if then, in that particular case, the heart will stoop to Christ, it is a true sign; for the truest trial of the power of grace is in such particular cases which touch us nearest, for there our corruption maketh the greatest head. When Christ came near home to the *young man*, Mat. x. 22, in the gospel, he lost a disciple of him. 8. When we can practise duties pleasing to Christ, though contrary to flesh, and the course of the world. And when we can overcome ourselves in that evil to which our nature is prone, and standeth so much inclined unto, and which agreeth to the sway of the times, and which others lie in-

thralled under; as desire of revenge, hatred of enemies, private ends, &c. then it appears that grace is in us above nature, heaven above earth, and will have the victory.

For the further clearing of this and helping of us in our trial, we must know there be three degrees of victory. 1. When we resist though we be foiled. 2. When grace gets the better though with conflict. 3. When all corruption is perfectly subdued. Now when we have strength but only to resist, yet we may know Christ's government in us will be victorious, because what is said of the devil is said of all our spiritual enemies, *If we resist, they shall* in time *fly from us*, James iv. 7: because *stronger is he that is in us*, that taketh part with his own grace, *than he that is in the world*, 1 John iv. 4. And if we may hope for victory upon bare resistance, what may we not hope for when the Spirit hath gotten the upper hand?

CHAP XXIII.

Means to make Grace victorious.

FOR *the second, that is, directions.*

We must know, though Christ hath undertaken this victory, yet he accomplisheth it by training us up to fight his battles; he overcometh in us, by making us *wise to salvation*, 2 Tim. iii. 15: and in what degree we believe Christ will conquer, in that degree we will endeavour by his grace that we may conquer; for faith is an obedient and a wise grace: Christ maketh us wise to ponder and weigh things, and thereupon to rank and order them so as we may make the fitter choice of what is best. Some rules to help us in judging are these:

To judge of things as they help or hinder the main: as they further or hinder our reckoning: as they make us more or less spiritual, and so bring us nearer to the fountain of goodness, God himself: as they bring us peace or sorrow at the last, as they commend us more or less to God, and wherein we shall approve ourselves to him most: likewise to judge of things now, as we shall do hereafter when the soul shall be best able to judge, as when we are under any public calamity, or at the hour of death, when the soul gathereth itself from all other things to itself. Look back to former experience, see what is most agreeable unto it, what was best in our worst times. If grace is or was best then, it is best now. And labour to judge of things as he doth who must judge us, and as holy men judge, who are led by the Spirit; more particularly, what those judge, that have no interest in any benefit that may come by the thing which is in question: for outward things blind the eyes even of the wise; we see papists are most corrupt in those things where their honour, ease, or profit is engaged; but in the doctrine of the Trinity, which doth not touch upon these things, they are sound. But it is not sufficient that judgment be right, but likewise ready and strong.

Where Christ establisheth his government, he inspireth care to keep the judgment clear and fresh, for whilst the judgment standeth straight and firm, the whole frame of the soul continueth strong and impregnable. True judgment in us advanceth Christ, and Christ will advance it. All sin is either from false *principles*, or ignorance, or mindlessness, or unbelief of true. By inconsideration and weakness of assent, Eve lost her hold at first, *Gen.* iii. It is

good, therefore, to store up true principles in our hearts, and to refresh them often, that in virtue of them our affections and actions may be more vigorous. When judgment is fortified, evil finds no entrance, but good things have a side within us, to entertain them. Whilst true convincing light continueth, we will not do the least ill of sin for the greatest ill of punishment. *In vain is the net spread in the eyes of that which hath wings*, Prov. i. 17. Whilst the soul is kept aloft, there is little danger of snares below; we lose our high estimation of things before we can be drawn to any sin.

And because knowledge and affection mutually help one another, it is good to keep up our affections of *love* and *delight*, by all sweet inducements and divine encouragements; for what the heart liketh best, the mind studieth most. Those that can bring their hearts to delight in Christ know most of his ways. *Wisdom loveth him that loves her.* Love is the best entertainer of truth; and when it is not *entertained in the love of it*, 2 Thess. ii. 10, being so lovely as it is, it leaveth the heart, and will stay no longer. It hath been a prevailing way to begin by withdrawing the love to corrupt the judgment; because as we love, so we use to judge: and therefore it is hard to be affectionate and wise in earthly things; but in heavenly things, where there hath been a right information of the judgment before, the more our affections grow, the better and clearer our judgments will b , because our affections, though strong, can never rise high enough to the excellency of the things. We see in the *martyrs*, when the sweet doctrine of Christ had once gotten their hearts, it could not be gotten out again by all the torments the wit of cruelty could

devise. If Christ hath once possessed the affections, there is no dispossessing of him again. A fire in the heart overcometh all fires without.

3. Wisdom likewise teacheth us wherein our weakness lieth, and our enemy's strength, whereby a jealous fear is stirred up in us, whereby we are preserved: for out of this godly jealousy we keep those provocations which are active and working, from that which is passive and catching in us, as we keep fire from powder. They that will hinder the generation of noisome creatures, will hinder the conception first, by keeping male and female asunder. This jealousy will be much furthered by observing strictly what hath helped or hindered a gracious temper in us: and it will make us take heed that we consult not with flesh and blood in ourselves or others. How else can we think that Christ will lead us out to victory, when we take counsel of his and our enemies.

4. Christ maketh us likewise careful to attend all means whereby fresh thoughts and affections may be stirred up and preserved in us; Christ so honoureth the use of means, and the care he putteth into us, that he ascribeth both preservation and victory unto our care of keeping ourselves. *He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself*, 1 John v. 18; but not by himself, but by the Lord, in dependance on him on the use of means. We are no longer safe than wise to present ourselves to all good advantages of acquaintance, &c. By going out of God's walks we go out of his government, and so lose our frame, and find ourselves overspread quickly with a contrary disposition. When we *draw near to Christ*, James iv. 8, in his ordinances *he draws near unto us*.

5. Keep grace in exercise: it is not sleepy habits,

but grace in exercise that preserveth us. Whilst the soul is in some civil or sacred employment, corruptions within us are much suppressed, and Satan's passages stopped, and the Spirit hath a way open to enlarge itself in us, and likewise the guard of *angels* then most nearly attends us; which course often prevails more against our spiritual enemies than direct opposition. It stands upon Christ's honour to maintain those that are in his work.

Sixthly, in all directions we must look up to Christ the quickening spirit, and resolve in his strength: though we are exhorted *to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart*, Acts xi. 23, yet we must pray with David, *Lord, for ever keep it in the thoughts of our hearts, and prepare our hearts unto thee*, 1 Chron. xxix. 13: our hearts are of themselves very loose and unsettled, *Lord, unite our hearts unto thee to fear thy name*, Psalm lxxxvi. 11; or else without him our best purposes will fall to the ground. It is a pleasing request, out of love to God, to beg such a frame of soul from him, wherein he may take delight; and therefore in the use of all the means, we must send up our desires and complaints to heaven, to him for strength and help, and then we may be sure that *he will bring forth judgment unto victory*.

Lastly, it furthers the state of the soul, to know what frame it should be in, that so we may order our souls accordingly; we should always be fit for communion with God, and be heavenly-minded in earthly business, and be willing to be taken off from them, to redeem time for better things; we should be ready at all times to depart hence, and to live in such a condition as we would be content to die in: we should have hearts prepared for every good duty, open to all good

occasions, and shut to all temptations, keeping our watch, and being always ready armed: so far as we come short of these things, so far we have just cause to be humbled, and yet press forward that we may gain more upon ourselves, and make these things more familiar and lovely unto us; and when we find our souls any ways falling downwards, it is best to raise them up presently by some waking meditations; as of the presence of God, of the strict reckoning we are to make, of the infinite love of God in Christ, and the fruits of it, of the excellency of a Christian's calling, of the short and uncertain time of this life: how little good all those things that steal away our hearts will do us ere long; and how it shall be for ever with us thereafter, as we spend this little time well or ill, &c. the more we give way for such considerations to sink into our hearts, the more we shall rise nearer to that state of soul which we shall enjoy in heaven. When we grow regardless of keeping our souls, then God recovers our taste of good things again by sharp crosses; thus David, Solomon, Samson, &c. were recovered: it is much easier kept than recovered.

But notwithstanding my striving, I seem to stand at a stay.

Grace, as the seed in the parable, grows, we know not how, yet at length when God seeth fittest, we shall see that all our endeavour hath not been in vain; the tree falleth upon the last stroke, yet all the former strokes help it forward.

Sometimes victory is suspended because some *Achan* is not found out, *Judges* xx. 26; or because we are not humble enough, as Israel had the worst against the Benjamites till they fasted and prayed; or because we betray our helps, and stand not upon our guard,

and yield not presently to the motions of the Spirit, which mindeth us always of the best things, if we would regard it. Our own consciences will tell us, if we give them leave to speak, that some sinful favouring of ourselves is the cause. The way in this case to prevail is, 1. To get the victory over the pride of our own nature, by taking shame to ourselves, in humble confession to God; and then, 2. To overcome the unbelief of our hearts, by yielding to the *promise* of pardon; and then, 3. In confidence of Christ's assistance to set ourselves against those sins which have prevailed over us; and then prevailing over ourselves we shall easily prevail over all our enemies; and conquer all conditions we shall be brought into.

CHAP. XXIV.

All should side with Christ.

IF Christ will have the victory, then it is the best way for nations and states to *kiss the Son*, Ps. ii, and to embrace Christ and his religion; to side with Christ, and to own his cause in the world, his side will prove the stronger side at last; happy are we if Christ honour us so much, as to use our help *to fight his battle against the mighty*, Judges v. 23. True religion in a state is as the main pillar of a house, and staff of a tent that upholds all: 2. So for families, let Christ be the chief governor of the family: and, 3. Let every one be as a house of Christ to dwell familiarly in, and to rule; where Christ is, all happiness must follow. If Christ goeth, all will go; where Christ's government in his ordinances and his Spirit is, there all subordinate government will prosper: religion inspireth life and grace into all other *virtues*,

without it they are but as a fair picture without a head. Where Christ's laws are written in the heart, there all other good laws are best obeyed; none despise man's law but those that despise Christ's first. Of all persons, a man guided by Christ is the best; and of all creatures in the world, a man guided by will and affection, next the devil, is the worst. The happiness of weaker things stands in being ruled by stronger: it is best for a blind man to be guided by him that hath sight; it is best for sheep, and such like shiftless creatures, to be guided by man; and it is happiest for man to be guided by Christ, because his government is so victorious, that it frees us from the fear and danger of our greatest enemies, and tends to bring us to the greatest happiness that our nature is capable of. This should make us to joy when Christ reigneth in us. When *Solomon was crowned, the people shouted,* so that the *earth rang;* much more should we rejoice in Christ our king.

And likewise for those whose souls are dear unto us, our endeavour should be that Christ may reign in them also; that they may be *baptized* by Christ with *fire;* that these sparks may be kindled in them, *Mat.* iii. 11. Men labour to cherish the spirit and metal, as they term it, of those they train up, because they think they will have use of it in the manifold affairs and troubles of this life. Oh, but let us cherish the sparks of grace in them: for a natural spirit in great troubles will fail, but these sparks will make them conquerors over the greatest evils.

If Christ's judgment shall be victorious, then popery, being an opposite frame, set up by the wit of man to maintain stately idleness, must fall. And it is fallen already in the hearts of those upon whom Christ hath

shined. It is a lie, and founded upon a lie, upon the infallible judgment of a man subject to sin and error. When that which is taken for a principle of truth becomes a principle of error, the more relying upon it, the more danger.

CHAP. XXV.

Christ's Government shall be openly victorious.

IT is not only said, *judgment* shall be victorious, but that Christ will *bring* it openly forth to victory. Whence we observe, that grace shall be glory, and run into the eyes of all. Now Christ doth conquer, and hath his own ends, but it is in some sort invisibly: his enemies within and without us seem to have the better. But he will *bring forth judgment unto victory*, to the view of all. The wicked that now shut their eyes shall see it to their torment. It shall not be in the power of subtle men to see or not see what they would; Christ will have power over their hearts; and as his wrath shall immediately seize upon their souls against their wills, so will he have power over the eyes of their souls, to see and know what will increase their misery; grief shall be fastened to all their senses, and their senses to grief.

Then all the false glosses which they put upon things shall be wiped off. Men are desirous to have the reputation of good, and yet the sweetness of ill; nothing so cordially opposed by them, as that truth which layeth them open to themselves, and to the eyes of others; their chief care being how to daub with the world and their own consciences. But the time will come when they shall be driven out of this fools' paradise, and the more subtle their conveyance of things

hath been, the more shall be their shame. Christ, whom God hath chosen to set forth the chief glory of his excellencies, is now veiled in regard of his body the church, but will come ere long to be *glorious in his saints*, 2 Thes. i. 10, and not lose the clear manifestation of any of his attributes; and will declare to all the world what *he is*, when there shall be no glory but that of Christ and his spouse. Those that are as *smoking flax* now shall then *shine as the sun in the firmament*, Matt. xiii. 43, and their *righteousness break forth as the noon-day*, Psalm xxxvii. 6.

The image of God in Adam had a commanding majesty in it, so that all creatures reverenced him; much more shall the image of God in the perfection of it command respect in all. Even now there is a secret awe put into the hearts of the greatest, towards those in whom they see any grace to shine, from whence it was that Herod *feared* John Baptist; but what will this be in their day of bringing forth, which is called *the day of the revelation of the sons of God?* Rom. viii. 19.

There will be more glorious times when *the kingdoms of the earth shall be the Lord Jesus Christ's*, Rev. xi. 10, and he shall for ever reign; then shall judgment and truth have its victory; then Christ will plead his own cause; truth shall no longer be called heresy and schism, nor heresy Catholic doctrine; wickedness shall no longer go masked and disguised; goodness shall appear in its own lustre, and shine in its own beams; things shall be what they are, *nothing is hidden but shall be laid open*, Matt. x. 26; iniquity shall not be carried in a mystery any longer; deep dissemblers, that think to hide their counsels from the Lord, shall walk no longer invisible as in the clouds.

As Christ will not quench the least spark kindled by himself, so will he damp the fairest blaze of goodly appearances which are not from above.

If this were believed, men would make more account of sincerity, which will only give us boldness, and not seek for cover-shames; the confidence whereof, as it maketh men now more presumptuous, so it will expose them hereafter to the greater shame.

If judgment shall be brought forth to victory, then those that have been ruled by their own deceitful hearts, and a spirit of error, shall be brought forth to disgrace: that God that hath joined grace and truth with honour, hath joined sin and shame together at last; all the wit and power of man can never be able to *sever what God hath coupled*. Truth and piety may be trampled upon for a time, but as the *two witnesses*, Rev. xi. 11, after they were slain rose again, and stood upon their feet; so whatsoever is of God shall at length stand upon its own bottom. There shall be a resurrection not only of bodies but of credits. Can we think he that threw the angels out of heaven will suffer dust and worm's meat to run a contrary course, and to carry it away always so? No; as verily as Christ is *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, Rev. xix. 16, so will he *dash all those* pieces of earth *which rise up against him as a potter's vessel*, Psalm ii. 9. *Was there ever any fierce against God and prospered?* Job ix. 4; No, doubtless the rage of man shall turn to Christ's praise. *Psalm* lxxvi. 10. What was said of Pharaoh shall be said of all heady enemies, who had rather lose their souls than their wills, that they are but raised up for Christ to get himself glory in their confusion.

Let us, then, take heed that we follow not the ways

of those men, whose ends we shall tremble at: there is not a more fearful judgment can befall the nature of man, than to be given up to a reprobate judgment of persons and things, because it cometh under a *woe to call ill good, and good ill*, Isaiah v. 20.

How will they be laden with curses another day, that abuse the judgment of others by sophistry and flattery, *deceivers, and being deceived?* Then the complaint of our first mother Eve will be taken up but fruitlessly, *Gen.* xiii. 3; the serpent hath deceived me: Satan in such and such hath deceived me; sin hath deceived me; a foolish heart hath deceived me. It is one of the highest points of wisdom to consider upon what grounds we venture our souls. Happy men will they be, who have by Christ's light a right judgment of things, and suffer that judgment to prevail over their hearts.

The soul of most men is drowned in their senses, and carried away with weak opinions, raised from vulgar mistakes and shadows of things. And Satan is ready to enlarge the imagination of outward good and outward ill, and make it greater than it is, and spiritual things less, presenting them through false glasses. And so men, trusting in vanity, vanquish themselves in their own apprehensions. A woful condition, when both we and that which we highly esteem shall vanish together, which will be as truly as Christ's judgment shall come to victory; and in what measure the vain heart of man hath been enlarged, to conceive a greater good in things of this world than there is, by so much the soul shall be enlarged to be more sensible of misery when it sees its error. This is the difference betwixt a godly wise man, and a deluded worldling; that which the one

doth now judge to be vain, the other shall hereafter feel to be so when it is too late. But this is the vanity of our natures, that though we shun above all things to be deceived and mistaken in present things, yet in the greatest matters of all we are willingly ignorant and misled.

CHAP. XXVI.

Christ alone advanceth this government.

THE fifth conclusion is, that this government is set up and advanced by Christ alone; he bringeth judgment to victory. We both fight and prevail *in the power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10; we overcome by the spirit obtained *by the blood of the lamb*, Rev. xii. 11.

It is *he* alone that *teacheth our hands to war, and fingers to fight*, Psalm xiv. 1. Nature, as corrupted, favours its own being, and will maintain itself against Christ's government. Nature, simply considered, cannot raise itself above itself to actions spiritual of a higher order and nature; therefore the divine power of Christ is necessary to carry us above all our own strength, especially in duties wherein we meet with greater opposition; for there not only nature will fail us, but ordinary grace, unless there be a stronger and a new supply. In taking up a burthen that is weightier than ordinary, if there be not a greater proportion of strength than weight, the undertaker will lie under it: so to every strong encounter there must be a new supply of strength; as in Peter, *Matt.* xxvi. 69, when he was assaulted with a stronger temptation, being not upheld and shored up with a mightier hand, notwithstanding former strength, foully fell. And being

fallen, in our raisings up again it is Christ that must do the work, 1. By removing; or 2. Weakening; or 3. Suspending opposite hinderances; 4. And by advancing the power of his grace in us, to a further degree than we had before we fell; therefore when we are fallen, and by falls have gotten a bruise, let us go to Christ presently to bind us up again.

Let us know, therefore, that it is dangerous to look for that from ourselves which we must have from Christ. Since the fall, all our strength lies in him, as *Samson's in his hair*, Judges xvi. 17; we are but subordinate agents, moving as we are moved, and working as we are first wrought upon, free so far forth as we are freed, no wiser nor stronger than he makes us to be for the present in any thing we undertake. It is his spirit that actuates, and enliveneth, and applieth that knowledge and strength we have, or else it faileth and lieth as useless in us; we work when we work upon a present strength; therefore dependant spirits are the wisest and the ablest. Nothing is stronger than humility, that goeth out of itself; or weaker than pride, that resteth upon its own bottom: and this should the rather be observed, because naturally we affect a kind of divinity, in setting upon actions in the strength of our own parts; whereas Christ saith, *Without me you*, apostles that are in state of grace, *can do nothing*, John xv. 5: he doth not say, you can do a little, but nothing: of ourselves, how easily are we overcome? how weak to resist? we are as reeds shaken with every wind; we shake at the very noise and thought of poverty, disgrace, losses, &c. we give in presently, we have no power over our eyes, tongues, thoughts, affections, but let sin pass in and out. How soon are we overcome of evil? whereas

we should overcome evil with good. How many good purposes stick in the birth, and have no strength to come forth? all which shows how nothing we are without the spirit of Christ. We see how weak the apostles themselves were, till they were endued with strength from above, *Matt.* xxvi. 69: Peter was blasted with the speech of a *damsel*, but after the spirit of Christ fell upon them, the more they suffered, the more they were encouraged to suffer: their comforts grew with their troubles; therefore in all, especially difficult encounters, let us lift up our hearts to Christ, who hath spirit enough for us all, in all our exigences; and say with good Jehosaphat, *Lord, we know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee*, 2 Chron. xx. 21: the battle we fight is thine, and the strength whereby we fight must be *thine*. If thou goest not out with us, we are sure to be foiled. Satan knows nothing can prevail against Christ, or those that rely upon his power; therefore his study is, how to keep us in ourselves, and in the creature: but we must carry this always in our minds, that that which is begun in self-confidence will end in shame.

The manner of Christ's *bringing forth judgment to victory*, is by letting us see a necessity of dependence upon him: hence proceed those spiritual desertions wherein he often leaveth us to ourselves, both in regard of grace and comfort, that we may know the spring-head of these to be out of ourselves. Hence it is that *in the mount*, that is, in extremities, *God is most seen*, Gen. xxii. 13. Hence it is that we are saved by the grace of faith, that carrieth us out of ourselves to rely upon another; and that faith worketh best alone, when it hath least outward support. Hence it is, that we often fail in lesser conflicts, and stand out

n greater, because in lesser we rest more in ourselves, n greater we fly *to the rock of our salvation, which s higher than we.* Hence likewise it is, that we are tronger after foils, because hidden corruption undis- erned before, is now discovered, and thence we are rought to make use of mercy pardoning, and power upporting. One main ground of this dispensation is, hat we should know it is Christ that giveth both the vill and the deed, and that as a voluntary work ac- ording to his own good pleasure. And therefore we hould *work out our salvation in a* jealous *fear and rembling*, Phil. ii. 12, lest by unreverent and pre- umptuous walking, we give him cause to suspend his gracious influence, and to leave us to the darkness of our own heart.

Those that are under Christ's government have the pirit of revelation, whereby they see and feel a divine ower sweetly and strongly enabling them for to pre- erve faith, when they feel the contrary, and hope in state hopeless, and love to God under signs of his displeasure, and heavenly-mindedness in the midst of vorldly affairs and allurements drawing a contrary way: they feel a power preserving patience, nay joy n the midst of causes of mourning, inward peace in the midst of assaults. Whence is it that when we are as- aulted with temptation, and when compassed with roubles, we have stood out, but from a secret strength upholding us? To make so little grace so victorious over so great a mass of corruption, this requireth a spirit more than human; this is as to preserve fire in the sea, and a part of heaven even as it were in hell. Here we know where to have this power, and to whom to return the praise of it. And it is our happiness, that it is so safely hid in Christ for us in one so near

unto God and us. Since the fall, God will not trust us with our own salvation, but it is both purchased and kept by Christ for us, and we for *it* through faith, wrought by the power of God, and laying hold of the same: which power is *gloriously* set forth by St. Paul, 1. To be *a great power;* 2. *An exceeding power;* 3. *A working and a mighty power;* 4. *Such a power as was wrought in raising Christ from the dead,* Ephes. i. 19. That grace which is but a persuasive offer, and in our pleasure to receive or refuse, is not that grace which brings us to heaven; but God's people feel a powerful work of the *Spirit*, not only revealing unto us our misery, and deliverance through Christ, but emptying us of ourselves, as being redeemed from ourselves, and infusing new life into us, and after strengthening us, and quickening of us when we droop and hang the wing, and never leaving us till perfect conquest.

CHAP. XXVII.

Victory not to be had without fighting.

THE sixth conclusion is, that this prevailing government shall not be without fighting; there can be no victory where there is no combat; in Isaiah it is said, *He shall bring judgment in truth,* Isaiah xlii. 3; here it is said, *he shall send forth judgment unto victory.* The word *send forth* hath a stronger sense in the original, *to send forth with force;* to shew, that *where his government is in truth, it will be opposed, until he getteth the upper hand.* Nothing is so opposed as Christ and his government, both within us and without us. And within us most in our first conversion, though corruption prevails not

so far as to make void the powerful work of grace, yet there is not only a possibility of opposing, but a proneness to oppose, and not only a proneness, but an actual withstanding the working of Christ's spirit, and that in every action, but yet no prevailing resistance so far as to make void the work of grace, but corruption in the issue yields to grace.

There is much ado to bring Christ into the heart, and to set a tribunal for him to judge there, there is an army of lusts mutiny against him. The utmost strength of most men's endeavours and parts is to keep Christ from ruling in the soul, the flesh still laboureth to maintain its own regency, and therefore it cries down the credit of whatsoever crosseth it, as God's blessed ordinances, &c. and highly prizeth any thing, though never so dead and empty, if it give way to the liberty of the flesh.

And no marvel if the spiritual government of Christ be so opposed; 1. Because it is government, and that limits the course of the will, and casteth a bridle upon its wanderings; every thing natural resists what opposeth it; so corrupt will labours to bear down all laws, and counteth it a generous thing not to be awed, and an argument of a low spirit to fear any, even God himself, until unavoidable danger seizeth on men, and then those that feared least out of danger fear most in danger, as we see in Balthasar, *Dan.* v. 6.

2. It is spiritual government, and therefore the less will flesh endure it: Christ's government bringeth the very thoughts and desires, which are the most immediate and free issue of the soul, into obedience; though a man were of so composed a carriage, that his whole life were free from outward offensive breaches, yet with Christ to be *carnally or worldly minded is*

death, Rom. viii. 6; he looketh on a worldly mind with a greater detestation than any one particular offence.

But Christ's spirit is in those who are in some degree earthly minded.

Truth it is, but not as an allower and maintainer, but as an opposer, subduer, and in the end as a conqueror: carnal men would fain bring Christ and the flesh together, and could be content with some reservation to submit to Christ; but Christ will be no underling to any base affection; and therefore where there is allowance of ourselves in any sinful lust, it is a sign the keys were never given up to Christ to rule us.

3. Again, this *judgment* is opposed, because it is judgment, and men love not to be judged and censured. Now Christ, in his truth, arraigneth them, giveth sentence against them, and bindeth them over to the latter judgment of the great day. And therefore they take upon them to judge that truth that must judge them, but truth will be too good for them; man hath a day now, which St. Paul calls *man's day*, 1 Cor. iv. 33, wherein he getteth upon his bench, and usurpeth a judgment over Christ and his ways; but God hath a day wherein he will set all straight, and his judgment shall stand. And the saints shall have their time, when they shall sit in judgment upon them that judge them now, 1 *Cor.* vi. 2. In the mean time Christ will rule in the midst of his enemies, even in the midst of our hearts, *Psalm* cx.

It is, therefore, no sign of a good condition to find all quiet, and nothing at odds: for can we think that corruption, which is the elder in us, and Satan the strong man, that keepeth many holds in us, will yield

possession quietly? No, there is not so much as a thought of goodness discovered by him, but he joineth with corruption to kill it in the birth. And as Pharaoh's cruelty was especially against the male children, so Satan's malice is especially against the most religious and manly resolutions.

This, then, we are always to expect, that wheresoever Christ cometh, there will be opposition: when Christ was born all Jerusalem was troubled; so when Christ is born in any man, the soul is in an uproar, and all because the heart is unwilling to yield up itself to Christ to rule it.

Wheresoever Christ cometh he breedeth division, not only 1. between man and himself, but, 2. between man and man, and, 3. between church and church: of which disturbance Christ is no more the cause than physic is of trouble in a distempered body, of which noisome humours are the proper cause: for the end of physic is the peace of humours. But Christ thinketh it fit that the thoughts of men's hearts should be discovered, and he is as well for the *falling* as the *rising of many in Israel*, Luke ii. 34.

Thus the desperate madness of men is laid open, that they had rather be under the guidance of their own lusts, and by consequence of Satan himself, to their endless destruction, than put their feet into Christ's fetters, and their necks under his yoke; whereas, indeed, Christ's service is the only true liberty, his yoke is an easy yoke, his burthen but as the burthen of wings to a bird, that maketh her fly the higher. Satan's government is rather a bondage than a government, unto which Christ giveth up those that shake off his own, for then he giveth Satan and his factors power over them, since they will not *re-*

ceive the truth in love, 2 Thess. ii. 20; take him, Jesuit, take him, Satan, blind him and bind him, and lead him to perdition. Those that take the most liberty to sin are the most perfect slaves, because most voluntary slaves; the will in every thing is either the best or the worst, the further men go on in a wilful course, the deeper they sink in rebellion; and the more they cross Christ, doing what they will, the more they shall one day suffer what they would not. In the mean time they are prisoners in their own souls, bound over in their consciences to the judgment of him after death, whose judgment they would none of in their lives. And is it not equal that they should feel him a severe judge to condemn them, whom they would not have a mild judge to rule them?

CHAP. XXVIII.

Be encouraged to go on cheerfully, with confidence of prevailing.

FOR conclusion and general application of all that hath been spoken unto ourselves. We see the conflicting, but yet sure and hopeful state of God's people. The victory lieth not upon us, but upon Christ, who hath taken upon him as to conquer for us, so to conquer in us. The victory lieth neither in our own strength to get, nor in our enemies to defeat it. If it lay upon us, we might justly fear. But Christ will maintain his own government in us, and take our part against our corruptions; they are his enemies as well as ours. *Let us therefore be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10; let us not look so much who are our enemies, as who is our judge and captain, nor what they threaten,

but what he promiseth; we have more for us, than against us. What coward would not fight, when he is sure of victory? none are here overcome, but he that will not fight. Therefore when any base fainting seizeth upon us, let us lay the blame where it is to be layed.

Discouragement rising from unbelief and ill report, brought upon the good land by the spies, moved God to swear in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest. Let us take heed a spirit of faint-heartedness, rising from seeming difficulty and disgrace, cast upon God's good ways, provoke not God to keep us out of heaven. We see here what we may look for from heaven. O beloved, it is a comfortable thing to conceive of Christ aright, to know what *love*, *mercy*, *strength* we have laid up for us in the breast of Christ. A good conceit of the physician, we say, is half the cure; let us make use of this his mercy and power every day, in our daily combats. Lord Jesus, thou hast promised not to quench the *smoking flax*, not to break the *bruised reed;* cherish thine own grace in me, leave me not to myself, the glory shall be thine. Let us not suffer Satan to transform Christ unto us, to be otherwise than he is to those that are his. Christ will not leave us, till he hath made us like himself, *all glorious within and without*, and *presented us blameless before his Father*. What a comfort is this in our conflicts with our unruly hearts, that it shall not always be thus? let us strive a little while, and we shall be happy for ever. Let us think when we are troubled with our sins, that Christ hath this in charge of his Father, *that he shall not quench the smoking flax*, until he hath subdued all. This putteth a shield into our hands to beat back all *the*

fiery darts of Satan, Ephes. vi. 16: he will object, thou art a great sinner; we may answer, Christ is a strong Saviour: but he will object, thou hast no faith, no love; yes, a spark of faith and love: but Christ will not regard that; yes, *he will not quench the smoking flax:* but this is so little and weak, that it will vanish and come to nought: nay, but Christ will cherish it, until he hath brought judgment to victory. And thus much for our comfort, we have already, that even when we first believed, we overcame God himself, as it were, by believing the pardon of all our sins; notwithstanding the guilt of our own consciences, and his absolute justice. Now having been prevailers with God, what shall stand against us if we can learn to make use of our faith?

O what a confusion is this to Satan, that he should labour to blow out a poor spark, and yet should not be able to quench it; that a *grain of mustard seed* should be stronger than the gates of *hell;* that it should be able *to remove mountains of* oppositions and temptations cast up by Satan and our rebellious hearts between God and us. Abimelech could not endure that it should be said, a *woman had slain him*, Judg. ix. 54; and it must needs be a torment to Satan, that a weak child, a woman, and decrepit old man should, by a spirit of faith, put him to flight.

Since there is such comfort where there is a little truth of grace, that it will be so victorious, let us oft try what God hath wrought in us, search our good as well as our ill, and be thankful to God for the least measure of grace, more than for any outward thing; it will be of more use and comfort than all this world, which passeth away and cometh to nothing. Yea, let us be thankful for that promised and assured vic-

tory, which we may rely on without presumption, as St. Paul doth; *thanks be to God, that hath given us victory in Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. xv. 57. See a flame in a spark, a tree in a seed; see great things in little beginnings; look not so much to the beginning, as to the perfection, and so we shall be in some degree joyful in ourselves, and thankful unto Christ.

Neither must we reason from a denial of a great measure of grace, to a denial of any at all in us; for faith and grace stand not in an indivisible point, so as he that hath not such and such a measure hath none at all: but as there is a great breadth between a spark and a flame, so there is a great wideness between the least measure of grace and the greatest: and he that hath the least measure, is within the compass of God's eternal favour; though he be not a shining light, yet he is a smoking wick, which Christ's tender care will not suffer him to quench.

And let all this that hath been spoken allure those that are not yet in state of grace, to come under Christ's sweet and victorious government, for though we shall have much opposition, yet if we strive, he will help us; if we fail, he will cherish us; if we be guided by him, we shall overcome; if we *overcome*, we are sure to be *crowned*. And for the present state of the church, we see now how forlorn it is, yet let us comfort ourselves, that Christ's cause shall prevail; *Christ will rule, till he hath made his enemies his footstool*, Psalm x. 11, not only to trample upon, but to help him up to mount higher in glory. *Babylon shall fall, for strong is the Lord who hath condemned her*, Rev. xviii. 8. Christ's judgment not only in his children, but also against his enemies shall be victorious, for he is *King of kings and Lord of*

lords, Rev. xix. 1. God will not always suffer Antichrist and his supports to revel and ruffle in the church as they do.

If we look to the present state of the church of Christ, it is as Daniel in the midst of lions, as a lily amongst thorns, as a ship not only tossed, but almost covered with waves. It is so low, that the enemies think they have buried Christ in regard of his Gospel, in the grave, and there they think to keep him from rising, but Christ as he rose in his person, so he will roll away all stones, and rise again in his church: how little support hath the church, and cause of Christ at this day? how strong a conspiracy is against it? the spirit of Antichrist is now lifted up, and marcheth furiously; things seem to hang on a small and invisible thread. But our comfort is, that Christ liveth and reigneth and standeth on Mount Sion in defence of them that stand for him, *Rev.* xiv. 1; and when states and kingdoms shall dash one against another, Christ will have care of his own children and cause, seeing there is nothing else in the world that he much esteemeth. At this very time the delivery of his church, and the ruin of his enemies is in working: we see not things in motion till Christ hath done his work, and then we shall see that the Lord reigneth.

Christ and his church when they are at the lowest, are nearest rising: his enemies at the highest are nearest a downfall.

The Jews are not yet come in under Christ's banner, but God, that hath persuaded Japhet to come into the tents of Shem, will persuade Shem to come into the tents of Japhet, *Gen.* ix. 27. The *fulness of the Gentiles is not yet come in*, Rom. xi. 25, but Christ, that hath the *utmost parts of the earth given him for*

is possession, Psalm ii. 8, will gather all the sheep is Father hath given him into one fold, that there may be one *sheepfold*, and one *shepherd*, John x. 16.

The faithful Jews rejoiced to think of the calling f the Gentiles: and why should not we joy to think of the calling of the Jews?

The Gospel's course hath hitherto been as that of he sun, from east to west, and so in God's time may proceed yet further west. No creature can hinder the ourse of the sun, nor stop the influence of heaven, nor hinder the blowing of the wind, much less hinder he prevailing power of *divine* truth, until Christ hath brought all under one head, and then he will present ll to his Father; these are they thou hast given unto ne; these are they that have taken me for their Lord nd King, that have suffered with me; my will is that hey be where I am, and reign with me. And then e will deliver up the kingdom even to his Father, nd put down all other rule and authority, and power, 1 *Cor.* xv. 24.

Let us then bring our hearts to holy resolutions, and et ourselves upon that which is good, and against that which is ill, in ourselves or others, according to our callings, upon this encouragement, that Christ's grace and power shall go along with us. What had become of that great work of reformation of religion n the latter-spring of the gospel, if men had not been armed with invincible courage to outstride all lets, upon this faith, that the cause was Christ's, and that he would not be wanting to his own cause. Luther ngeniously confessed, that he carried matters often nconsiderately, and with mixture of passion; but upon acknowledgment, God took not advantage of his errors, but the cause being God's, and his aims

being holy, to promote the truth, and being a mighty man in prayer, and strong in faith, God by him kindled that fire which all the world shall never be able to quench. According to our faith, so is our encouragement to all duties, therefore let us strengthen faith, that it may strengthen all other graces. This very belief, that faith shall be victorious, is a means to make it so indeed. Believe it, therefore, that though it be often as *smoking flax*, yet it shall prevail. If it prevail with God himself in trials, shall it not prevail over all other opposition? *Let us wait awhile, and we shalls ee the salvation of the Lord*, Exod. iv. 13.

The Lord reveal himself more and more unto us in the face of his Son Jesus Christ, and magnify the power of his grace in cherishing those beginnings of grace in the midst of our corruptions, and sanctify the consideration of our own infirmities to humble us, and of his tender mercy to encourage us: and persuade us, that since he hath taken us into the covenant of grace, he will not cast us off for those corruptions; which as they grieve his spirit, so they make us vile in our own eyes. And because Satan labours to obscure the glory of his mercy, and hinder our comfort by discouragements, the Lord add this to the rest of his mercies, that we may make the right use of this grace, and not lose any portion of comfort that is laid up for us in Christ. And he vouchsafe to let the prevailing power of his spirit in us be an evidence of the truth of grace begun, and a pledge of final victory, at that time when he will be all in all, in all his, for all eternity. *Amen.*

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Matthew, xvi. 7
Mark, ix. 24
Acts, ix. 4 ; xxvi. 27
Romans, vii. 24 ; xiv. 22
1 Corinthians, iii. 13 ; iv. 8 ; xvi. ult.
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1 Thessalonians, v. 19
2 Timothy, iii. 9
James, iii. 17
1 John, v. 18

A FOUNTAIN SEALED;

OR, THE DUTY OF THE SEALED TO THE SPIRIT, AND THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN SEALING.

WHEREIN MANY THINGS ARE HANDLED ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND GRIEVING OF IT: AS ALSO OF ASSURANCE AND SEALING WHAT IT IS, THE PRIVILEGES AND DEGREES OF IT, WITH THE SIGNS TO DISCERN, AND MEANS TO PRESERVE IT.

TO

HE TRULY NOBLE AND MUCH HONOURED LADY, THE

LADY ELIZABETH BROOKE,

WIFE TO SIR ROBERT BROOKE.

MADAM,

BESIDES that deserved interest your Ladyship held in the affections and esteem of this worthy nan more than any friend alive, which might entitle rou to all that may call him Author, this small piece of his acknowledgeth a more special propriety unto rour Ladyship. For though his tongue was as the pen of a ready writer in the hand of Christ who guided him, yet your Ladyship's hand and pen was in this his scribe and amanuensis whilst he dictated a first draught of it in private, with intention for the public. In which labour, both of humility and love, your Ladyship did that honour unto him which Baruch, though great and noble, did but receive in the like, transcribing the words of Jeremiah from his mouth: wherein yet your Ladyship did indeed but write the story of your own life, which hath been long exactly framed to the rules herein prescribed. We therefore, that are entrusted in the publishing of it, deem it

but an act of justice in us to return it thus to your Ladyship, unto whom it owes even its first birth: that so wherever this little treatise shall come, there also this that you have done may be told and recorded for a memorial of you. And we could not but esteem it also an addition of honour to the work, that no less than a lady's hand, so pious and so much honoured, brought it forth into the world, although in itself it deserveth as much as any other this blessed womb did bear. The Lord, in way of recompense, write all the holy contents of it yet more fully and abundantly in your Ladyship's heart, and all the lineaments of the image of Jesus Christ, and seal up all unto you by his blessed spirit, with joy and peace to the day of redemption.

Madam,

We are your Ladyship's devoted,

THOMAS GOODWIN, PHILIP NYE.

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A FOUNTAIN SEALED.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. EPHES. iv. 30.

WHETHER the words be a command ensuing from authority, or counsel, from wisdom, or a caveat from God's care of our souls, it is not material: considering both counsel and caveats of the great God have both force of a command, with some mixture of the sweetness of love: the apostle as his manner is, from the largeness of his spirit, riseth from a particular dissuasive from corrupt communication, in the verse before, to this general advice of not grieving God's Spirit by sin; especially against conscience enlightened: and this dissuasive from evil is enforced from a dangerous effect of grieving the Spirit of God; and the danger of grieving ariseth from this, that it is the Spirit of God, and God himself whom we grieve, and a holy Spirit, holy in himself, and holy as the cause of all holiness in us; and he, that after he hath wrought holiness in us, sealeth and confirmeth us in that act of grace, until the day of our glorious redemption: so that the grounds of not grieving are from the greatness and goodness of the person whom we grieve, and from the greatness and constancy of the benefits we have by him. To speak something of the person, the holy Spirit is called a spirit, not only by nature, as being a spiritual essence, but in regard of his person and office, he is both

breathed from the Father and the Son, as proceeding from them both; and by office, breatheth into all that God hath given Christ to redeem, and him to sanctify; he is so the Spirit of God in proceeding from God, as that he is God, which whoso denieth, deny their own baptism; being as well baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, as into the Father and the Son; and no less a person than God is needful to assure our souls of God's love, and to change our nature, being in an opposite frame: who can reveal to us the mind of God, but the Spirit of God; and herein we may see the joint forwardness both of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost; when both Father and Son join in willingness to send so great a person to apply unto us, and to assure us of that great good the Father hath decreed, and the Son performed for us.

That attribute the Spirit delights in is that of holiness, which our corrupt nature least delights in, and most opposeth: holiness is the glory and crown of all other excellency; without which they are neither good in themselves, nor comfortable to us. It implies a freedom from all impurity, and a perfect hatred of it; an absolute perfection of all that is excellent. What is it then to grieve such a holy Spirit, before whom the heavens themselves are impure, and not only the devils tremble, but the angels cover their faces? what shall we think then of them which do not only neglect, but despise, yea oppose, this holiness, and endure any thing else? what is hated in the world with keen and perfect hatred, but *holiness; without which* yet, *we shall never see God*, nor enter into that pure place, into which we all profess a desire to enter? There was planted in man by nature a desire of holiness, and a desire of happiness: the desire

of happiness is left still in us; but for holiness, which is the perfection of the image of God in us, is both lost and the desire of it extinguished: and that men might the better drive it out of the world under a form and shew of it, they oppose the truth of it, and that with the greater success, because under that great colour the devil and his vicar carry all their devilish policies under a shew of holiness. We see in popery every thing is holy with them, but that which should be holy—the truth of God, and the expression of it. The man of sin himself must have no worse title than his holiness: a shew of devised holiness pleaseth man's nature well enough; as being glorious for appearance, and useful for ends. But the truth of it being cross to the whole corrupt nature of man, will never be entertained, until nature be new moulded by his holy Spirit in the use of holy means, sanctified by himself for that end: it is this that makes a man a saint, and civil virtues to be graces, which raiseth things that are otherwise) common, to a higher degree of excellency; this is that to a Christian which reason is to a man: it gives him a being and a beauty different from all other: it makes every action we do in obedience to God a service, and puts a religious respect upon all our actions, directing them to the highest end.

Now that which the apostle dissuades from, is from grieving so holy a Spirit. These truths are presupposed: First, that the Holy Ghost is not in us personally as the second person is in Christ man; for then he Holy Ghost and we should make one person: nor is the Holy Ghost in us essentially only: for so he is in all creatures: nor yet is in us only by stirring up holy notions, but he is in us mystically, and as temples dedicated to himself. Christ's human nature is the

first temple, wherein the Spirit dwells; and then we become temples by union with him. The difference betwixt his being in Christ and us is, that the Spirit dwells in Christ in a fuller measure; by reason that as a head he is to convey spirit into all his members. Secondly, the Spirit is in Christ entirely without any thing to oppose: the Spirit always finds something in us that is not his own, but ready to cross him. Thirdly, the Spirit is in us derivatively from Christ, as a fountain we receive grace at second-hand, answerable to grace in him. The Holy Ghost was in Adam before his fall, immediately; but now he is in Christ first, and then for Christ in us, as members of that body, whereof Christ is the head: and it is well for us that he dwells first in Christ and then in us: for from this it is that his communion with us is inseparable, as it is from Christ himself, with whom the Spirit makes us one. The holy Spirit dwells in those that are Christ's after another manner than in others in whom he is in, in some sort by common gifts; but in his own, he is in them as holy, and as making them holy, as the soul is in the whole body in regard of divers operations; but in the head only as it understandeth, and from thence ruleth the whole body; so the Holy Ghost is in his, in regard of more noble operations, and his person is together with his working, though not personally; and though the whole man be the temple of the Holy Ghost, yet the soul especially, and in the soul the very spirit of our minds, as most suitable to him, being a spirit. Whence the apostle wishes *the grace of Christ to be with our spirits*, the best of spirits delight most in the best of us, which is our spirits: in the temple the further they went, all was more holy, till they came to the holy of holiest. So

n a Christian the most inward part the spirit is, as it were the holy of holies, where incense is offered to God continually. What a mercy is this that he that hath the heaven of heavens to dwell in, will make a dungeon to be a temple; a prison to be a paradise; yea, a hell to be a heaven? Next to the love of Christ in taking our nature and dwelling in it, we may wonder at the love of the Holy Ghost, that will take up his residence in such defiled souls.

The second thing presupposed, is that the holy Spirit being in us after he hath prepared us for a house for himself to dwell in, and to take up his rest and delight in, he doth also become unto us a counsellor in all our doubts, a comforter in all distresses, a solicitor to all duty, a guide in the whole course of our life, until we dwell with him for ever in heaven: unto which his dwelling here in us doth tend: he goeth before us as Christ did in the pillar of the cloud and fire before the Israelites into Canaan: being a defence by day, and a direction by night. When we sin, what do we else but grieve this guide?

The third ground is, that we, the best of us, are prone to grieve this holy Spirit: what use were there else of this caveat? we carry too good a proof of this in our own hearts: we have that which is enmity to the spirit within us, sin; and an adversary to the spirit and us, Satan: these joining together, and having intelligence, and holding correspondency, one with another stir us up to that which grieves this good Spirit.

The fourth thing presupposed is, that we may and ought, by Christian care and circumspection, so to walk in an even and pleasing course, that we shall not grievously offend the Spirit, or grieve our own

spirits. We may avoid many lashes and blows, and many a heavy day which we may thank ourselves for, and God delighteth in the prosperity of his children, and would have us walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and is grieved when we grieve him: that then he must grieve us to prevent worse grief. The due and proper act of a Christian in this life is to please Christ, and to be comfortable in himself, and so to be fitted for all services.

These things premised, it is easy to conceive the equity of the apostle's dissuasive from grieving the Holy Spirit. For the better unfolding of which, we will unfold these four points. First, what it is to grieve the Spirit. Secondly, is wherein we specially grieve the Spirit. Thirdly, how we may know when we have grieved the Spirit. Fourthly, what course we should take to prevent this grief.

For the first: the Holy Ghost cannot properly be grieved in his own person, because grief implies a defect of happiness in suffering that we wish removed. It implies a defect in foresight, to prevent that which may grieve. It implies passion, which is soon raised up, and soon laid down: God is not subject to change; it implies some want of power to remove that which we feel to be a grievance: and therefore it is not beseeming the majesty of the Spirit thus to be grieved. We must therefore conceive of it as befitting the majesty of God, removing in our thoughts all imperfections. First, then, we are said to grieve God, when we do that which is apt of itself to grieve: as we are said to destroy our weak brother, when we do that which he taking offence at is apt to mislead him, and so to destroy him. Secondly, we grieve the Spirit, when we do that whereupon the Spirit doth

that which grieved persons do; that is, retireth and sheweth dislike, and returns grief again. Thirdly, though the passion of grief be not in the Holy Ghost, yet there is in his holy nature a pure displicence and hatred of sin, with such a degree of abomination as though it tend not to the destruction of the offender, yet to sharp correction: so that *grief* is eminently in the *hatred* of God in such a manner as becomes him. Fourthly, we may conceive of the Spirit as he is in himself in heaven, and as he dwells and works in us; as we may conceive of God the Father as hidden in himself, and as revealed in his Son, and in his word; and as we may conceive of Christ as the second person, and as incarnate: so likewise of the holy Ghost as in himself, and as in us, God, in the person of his Son: and his Son as man, and as minister of circumcision, was grieved at the rebellion and destruction of his own people. The holy Spirit, as in us grieveth with us, witnesseth with us, rejoiceth in us, and with us; and the Spirit in himself, and as he worketh in us hath the same name, as the gifts and graces, and the comforts of the Spirit are called the spirit; even as the beams of the sun shining on the earth are called the sun: and when we let them in, or shut them out, we are said to let in or shut out the sun. We may grieve the Spirit, when we grieve him, as working grace, and offering comfort to us: the graces of the Spirit have the name of the Spirit whence they come, as the Spirit of love and wisdom. Again, our own spirits, so far as sanctified, are said to be the Spirit of God: so the Spirit of God, not in itself, but in Noah, did strive with the old world, and so we grieve the Spirit, when we grieve our own or other men's spirits, so far as they are sanctified by the Spirit.

Now the Spirit as in us worketh in us, according to the principles of man's nature, as understanding and free creatures, and preserveth the free manner of working proper to man; and doth not always put forth an absolute prerogative power, but dealeth with us by way of gentle and sweet motions and persuasions; and leaveth it in our freedom to embrace or refuse these inferior works of the Spirit: and our hearts tell us it is in our power to entertain or reject the motions: which when we do in our own apprehension, we churlishly offend the Spirit, as willing to draw us to better ways; and we cannot otherwise judge of this, but as grieving. God, in his dealing with men, puts his cause into our hands, that by our prayers and otherwise, we may help or hinder him against the mighty. And Christ puts himself into our hands in his ministers, and in the poor; counts himself regarded or neglected in them: so the holy Spirit puts as it were his delight and contentment in our power, and counts when we entertain his motions of grace or comfort, we entertain him; and when we refuse them, we grieve him. And the Holy Ghost will have us interpret our refusing of his motion, to be a refusing of him; and not only a refusing of him, but of the Son, and of the Father, whose spirit he is. Oh, if we did but consider how high the slighting of a gracious motion reaches, even to the slighting of God himself; it would move us to give more regard unto them. As we use these motions, so would we use the Spirit himself, if he were in our power. They are not only the ambassadors, but the royal offspring of the Spirit in us, and when we offer violence to them, we kill as much as in us lieth, the royal seed of the Spirit.

It may be objected, when we do any thing amiss, we intend not the grieving of the Spirit? It is true, unless we were devils incarnate, we will not purposely and directly grieve the Spirit; but when we sin, we will the grieving of him in the cause. No man hates his own soul, or is in love with death, yet men will willingly do that, which if they hated their own souls, and loved death, they could not do worse. *Why will you perish, you house of Israel?* saith God, they intended no such matter as perishing: God's meaning is, why will you go on in such destructive courses as will end in perishing? if we could hate hell in the cause of it, and way to it, as we hate it in itself, we would never come there.

For the second point, wherein we especially grieve the Spirit: grief ariseth either from antipathy and contrariety, or from disunion of things naturally joined together. In greater persons especially, grief ariseth from any indignity offered from neglect or disrespect, and most of all from unkindness after favour shewed. Thus the Holy Ghost is grieved by us: what more contrary to holiness than sin, which is the thing, and the only thing that God abominates, yea, in the devil himself? But then add to the contrariety in sin the aggravations from unkindness; and this makes it more sinful. What greater indignity can we offer to the holy Spirit, than to prefer base dust before his motions? leading us to holiness and happiness? what greater unkindness, yea, treachery, to leave directions of a friend to follow the counsel of an enemy? such as when they know God's will, yet will consent with flesh and blood, like Balaam, who was swayed by his prophet against a clear discovery of God's will. We

cannot but make the Spirit of God in us in some sort ashamed to think of our folly; in *leaving the fountain*, and *digging cisterns:* in leaving a true guide, and following the pirate: men are grieved especially, when they are disrespected in their place and office. It is the office of the Spirit to enlighten, to soften, to quicken, and to sanctify; when we give content to Satan, it puts the Holy Ghost out of office. The office of the Holy Ghost is likewise to be a comforter: it cannot therefore but grieve the holy Spirit, when *the consolations of the Almighty* are either forgotten, or *seem nothing* unto us in the pettishness of our spirits; when with Rachel *we will not be comforted.* Who, instead of wrestling with God by prayer, wrangle with him by cavilling objections: they take pleasure to move objections, instead of a holy submission to higher reasons that might raise them to comfort; and take Satan's part against the holy Spirit, and their own spirit: and against arguments that are ministered by those that are more skilful in the ways of salvation than themselves. How little beholding is the holy Spirit to such who please themselves in a spirit of opposition? and yet so sweet is this holy Spirit, that, after long patience, he overcomes many of these with his goodness: and makes them at length with shame lay their hands upon their mouths, and be silent. Yet that is one reason they stick so long in temptations, and are kept so long under *the spirit of bondage.* Those likewise cannot but grieve the Comforter, that leave his comforts, and seek for other comforters; that think there is not comfort enough in religion, but will bow down to the world, such as linger after the liberties of the flesh, after stolen waters; as if God

kept house not good enough for them. It is a great disparagement to prefer husks before the provision of our father's house, and to die, like fish out of their proper element, if we want carnal comforts. But above all, they grieve the Spirit most, that have had deepest acquaintance with the Spirit; and have received greatest favours from the Spirit. When the Holy Ghost comes in love, and we have given way to him to enlighten our understandings, and when in our affections we have tasted of the good things of God, that the promises are sweet, and the gospel is good. When we have given such way to the Spirit, then to to use him unkindly; this grieves the Spirit. Where the Holy Ghost hath not only set up a light but given a taste of heavenly things, and yet we upon false allurements will grow to a distaste, it cannot but grieve the Spirit. And this makes the *sin against the Holy Ghost* so desperate, because there hath been a strong conviction and illumination. Therefore of all sins, the sins of professors of religion grieve the Spirit most; and of all professors those that have most means of knowledge: because their obligations are deeper, and their engagements greater. The deeper the affection hath entered, the greater the grief must needs be in unloosing. The offence of friends grieves more than the injuries of enemies. And therefore the sins that offend God most are committed within the church; where is the greatest sin of all, the sin against the Holy Ghost committed, but within the church? and where there is the greatest light, and the greatest means. Sins against knowledge grieve most, especially, if there be a malicious opposing; for there can be nothing to excuse it. The malice of the will maketh the sin of the

deeper die: and it is contrary to the Spirit, as it is a spirit of goodness, and hence is it that presumptuous sins so much grieve the Spirit, for by such sins we abuse the sweetest attribute of God's Spirit, his goodness, and be therefore evil because he is good, and turn his grace into wantonness, the sin of this age. Sins against knowledge are either such as are, 1. Directly against knowledge, as when we will not understand what we should do, because we will not do what we understand; such put out the candle, that they may sin with the more freedom. This kind of ignorance doth not free from sin, but increaseth it: some men will not hear the Word, nor read good books, lest their consciences should be awakened: this affected ignorance increaseth the voluntariness. Again, when we maintain untruths for any advantage, knowing them to be untruths; as many learned papists cannot but do. What a great indignity is it to the Spirit of God to *sell the truth*, which we should *buy*, yea with the loss of our lives: and to prefer the pleasing of a base man, or some gain to ourselves, before a glorious *beam* of God? Other sins, if we know them to be sins, are sins against knowledge, not so directly, but collaterally: yet this will be the chief aggravation, when our consciences are once awakened, not so much that we have sinned, as that we have sinned against the light, when the will hath nothing to plead for itself but itself; it would, because it would, though it knew the contrary. Involuntariness takes away something of the heinousness of sin: when there is ignorance, perturbation, or passion, there is less sin, and less grieving of the Spirit: but when there are none of these, but a man will sin, because he will; accounting it a kind of

sovereignty to have his will, this will prove the most miserable condition: for not to have the will regulated by him that is the chiefest good is the greatest perverseness, and will end in desperation.

Ques. Why are voluntary sins so great, and so much grieve the Spirit of God?

Ans. When there is passion, there is some colour for sin; as profit, pleasure, fear to displease, &c. When there is ignorance, there is a want of that that might help the understanding; but when there are none of these, and a man willingly sins, he is more *directly* carried against the command and will of God: there is nothing puts him on: yet he accounts it so small a matter, that he will do it without any provocation, out of a slight esteem of the good pleasure and will of God.

As common swearers, can they plead ignorance? they know the commandment, *God will not hold them guiltless that take his name in vain*, Exodus xx: can they plead perturbation? They do it oft in a bravery, when they are not urged: there is no engagement in that sin of profit or pleasure, but a voluntary superfluity of pride. They would have you to know, that they are men that care not for God himself, let God and his ministers take it as they will, though I have no pleasure or profit by it, yet I will have my liberty. The heart that hath been thus wicked, will hardly admit of comfort, when it stands in need of it.

We are not said to be ill, because we know ill, but because we will and consent to ill; it is the will that makes up the bargain, sin were not sin else. God hath given us the custody of our own souls; and as long as we keep the keys faithfully, and betray not

our souls to Satan, so long we possess our own souls, and our comfort: but when he suggests—do this, or speak this, and we consent, he takes full and free possession of us, as much as in us lies; and God in judgment saith Amen to it. God saith, take him, Satan: since he will not have my spirit to rule him, it is fit he should have a worse. The more willingness, the more sinfulness, and the less defence; and God's justice cannot better be satisfied, than by punishing them most against their wills, who sinned most with their will. The clearer the light is, and the more advantages it hath, the more we sin.

In this respect it is, that sins against the second table grieve more than sins against the first; because here the conscience is more awakened. These be sins against a multiplied light, against the light of nature, light of the Word and Spirit: and such sins are contrary to human society, they dissolve those bonds that nature, even by the common relics it hath left, studies to maintain. Though corrupt nature hath no good in it, for we deserved to be like devils, yet God intending to have civil society, out of which he usually gathers his Church: preserveth in man's nature a hatred of sins that overthrow society: such sins therefore being committed against more light, wound more: as in case of murder, notorious perjury, theft, &c.

Therefore God oft gives up men, upon breach of the first table, to breaches of the second, that so they may come to more grief and shame, as being the breakers of both tables: men never fall into the breach of the second table, but upon breach of the first: no man despiseth man's law, but he despiseth God's law first: no man breaks the *law of nature*, but he despiseth the *God of nature*. Profane athe-

istical persons that glory in the breach of the third commandment by swearing; God meets with them by giving them over to gross abominable sins of the second table; which vexeth them more, though they should not, than sins against the first table, exposing them, besides inward grief, to open shame; then God opens conscience to tell them, not only that they are to blame for their gross sins, but for the root of them; atheism, profaneness, looseness, which are sins against the first table. This is an aggravation of sins against knowledge, when our knowledge hath been holpen and strengthened by education, by example of others running into our eyes, which is a more familiar teaching than that of rule, and strengthened also by observation and experience of ourselves; and the former strength we have had against the sin we now commit: and sweetness we have found in the resisting of it. None are worse than those that have been good, and are naught, and might be good, and will be naught. When there is more deliberation and fore-knowledge of the dangerous issue, and this also joined with the warning of others. As Reuben said unto the rest of his brethren, *Spake I not unto you*? &c. So may God's Spirit, and conscience, say to men, did not I acquaint you with the danger of sin? You are now in misery, and terrors of conscience, but did you not slight former admonitions, and helps, and means? Conscience is an inferior light of the Spirit: to do things against conscience is to do them against the Spirit. God spake to me, and I heeded him not: how doth God speak? When conscience speaks, and saith this is good, this is bad, then God speaks; conscience hath somewhat divine in it: it is a petty god, it speaks from God;

especially when the Spirit joins with conscience, then God speaks indeed, then there is light upon light.

Upon divers respects some sin may grieve more or less than another. As the Holy Ghost is a Spirit, so *spiritual sins* grieve most; as pride, envy; imprinting upon the soul as it were a character of the contrary ill spirit. *Carnal sins*, whereby the soul is drowned in delight of the body, may more grieve the Spirit in another respect; as defiling his temple, and as taking away so much of the soul; love and delight carry the soul with them, and the more deeply such sins enter into the creature, besides the defilement, the less strength it hath to spiritual duties: grace is seated in the powers of nature, now carnal sins disable nature: and so set us in a greater distance from grace, as taking away the heart, *Hos.* iv. Hereupon the apostle sets being *filled with wine*, contrary to being *filled with the Spirit*, Eph. v. 18. And hence it is the apostle forbids, in the former words, *unclean communication*: the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of truth, hates hypocrites; being painted sepulchres; but as a spirit of purity, hates foul livers, and foul-mouthed speakers, as open sepulchres. They cannot, therefore, but much grieve the Spirit, that feed corrupt lusts, and study to give contentment, and pay tribute, to the flesh; to which they owe no service and are no debtors; and by sowing to the flesh from which we can reap nothing but corruption, *Gal.* vi. When our thoughts are exercised to content the outward man, to contrive for the things of the world only; this is to pay tribute of the strength and vigour of our affections to the utter enemy of God's Spirit, and our own souls: when our thoughts run deeply into earthly things, we become one with them.

Who will think himself well entertained into a house, when there shall be entertainment given to his greatest enemy with him? and shall see more regard had, and better countenance shewed to his enemy, than to him? when the motions of corrupt nature are more regarded than the motions of the Spirit. The *wisdom* of the Spirit *which is from above, is first pure*, and maketh us so, and raiseth the soul upward to things above. Christians, indeed, have their failings; but if a true Christian examine himself, his heart will say, that every day he intends the glory of God, and the good of the state he lives in: he hath a larger heart than a base worldling that keeps within the sphere of himself; spending all his thoughts there, and consults only with flesh and blood, with profit and pleasure, to hear what they say. Such baseness cannot but grieve the Spirit, as contrary to our hopes and heavenly calling, which are glorious.

It is a dangerous grieving of the Spirit, when instead of drawing ourselves to the Spirit, we will labour to draw the Spirit to us, and study the scriptures, to countenance us in some corrupt course; and labour to make God of our mind, that we may go on with the greater liberty. When men get to themselves teachers after their own lusts, as many do, especially if they be in place, Ahab shall not want his four hundred false prophets. When men cut the rule and standard to fit themselves, and not fit themselves to it. You have some that are resolved what to do, and yet will be asking counsel, and if they have an answer to their minds, then they rest; if not, then their answer is: This is your judgment, but others are of a contrary opinion: and thus they labour to make the Spirit of

God in his ministers to serve their turn, so did the Jews in Jeremiah's time, *Jer.* xlii.

Some will father those sinful affections that arise from the flesh, and are strengthened by Satan, upon the holy Spirit, counting wrath that is kindled from hell to be fire of holy zeal coming from heaven. Thus the enemies of religion think they do God service in their massacres; such are those that wickedly oppose the ways of God, and yet are ready to say, *Glory be to the Lord;* such men study holiness in the shew, that they may overthrow it in the power; and will countenance an ill course by religion.

Such also are faulty who lay the blame of an uncomfortable life upon religion, when men are therefore uncomfortable, because they are not religious enough. The *ways of wisdom are the ways of pleasure.*

In these times, being the second spring of the Gospel, we must take heed of sins against the Gospel. Benefits, the greater they are, being neglected, or abused, bring the greater judgment. The office of the holy Spirit is, by the ministry, to lay open the riches of Christ, and the glory of God's grace in him: by neglecting so great salvation, and by thinking this favour of God to be a common favour; we sin against both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in that they desire most to be glorified. Such therefore as say to the clouds, drop not, and to the winds, blow not, and to the *prophets, prophesy not;* that study to keep out the light and sin against it, as discovering them, and awakening them, and hindering them from taking that solace in carnal courses of the world: as opening the eyes of others to know them further than they would be known, and so to lose that respect they would have

in the hearts of men. This cannot but grieve the Spirit of God; and move him to take away that truth that we are so far from thinking a blessing, that we are weary of it, and fret against it.

The office of the Spirit is to set out Christ, and the favour, and mercy of God in Christ: when we slight Christ in the Gospel, the ordinance, and organ of working good in us, the Holy Ghost is slighted, and grieved. Bad is our condition by nature, and what a deal of misery do we add to this bad condition? Are we not all the children of wrath? And have we not since we were born added sin unto sin? Do we not grow in sin as we do in years? Is not God just? and hell terrible? Now God out of infinite mercy having provided a way to free us from the danger of sin; and not only so, but to advance us to life everlasting; and that we should not be ignorant of that he hath done for us, he hath set up an ordinance wherein the Holy Ghost discovers his love. When we slight this, and account it but an ordinary favour, nay, rather a burthen, and think the opening of divine mysteries, things that may be spared; that there is too much preaching, and what needs all this ado? This grieves the Spirit, whose office is to lay open the unsearchable riches of Christ, the infinite and glorious mercy, and goodness of God in Christ, wherein God hath set himself, in all his attributes, to triumph, and be glorified. We grieve all the sacred Trinity: God the Father is grieved to see his mercy slighted: God the Son, to see his blood accounted common; and God the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to discover these things. This is the common sin of the times and kingdom, which threateneth judgment more than any thing else. When the Gospel, the blessed truth of salvation, is published,

The axe is laid to the root of the tree, the instrument of destruction: if men slight the mercies of God, entertain not Christ, walk not worthy of the Gospel, they shall feel the stroke of his sharp anger. The blood-red horse followeth the white horse, *Rev.* vi. 4. The white horse is the publishing of the Gospel: when God sets himself to glorify himself, in mercy, in the greatest benefits, and we account them nothing or but common favours, God removes the candlestick: the red horse of blood, and destruction, follows. And indeed what man will endure his greatest favours and kindness to be slighted?

Now a degree in grieving the Spirit this way is, when men will not be thoroughly convinced of their own sinful condition, and of the infinite love and mercy of God in Christ, in the pardoning of them. If God by his Spirit in the ministery, or in a particular reproof come to men, and discover their natural condition, and tell them they are worse than they take themselves to be: they will oppose it, and study revenge, as St. Paul saith, *Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* thus must needs grieve the Spirit.

Again, the holy Spirit is grieved, when ye have a corrupt judgment of things, not weighing them in the right balance, nor value them according to their worth. When we esteem any knowledge rather than divine knowledge, any truths but truths that concern Christ, when men look upon grace as contemptible, and prefer other things above it, make a tush at holiness, give us, say they, gifts and parts. Alas, what are all gifts and parts without a gracious heart? Have not the devils greater parts than any man? Are they not called *demons*, from the largeness of their

understanding? If parts and gifts were best, the devils were better than we. What an indignity is this to the holy Spirit, to think it better to be accounted witty, and politic, than to be holy and gracious?

Again, those sins wherein there is plotting and contriving, exceedingly grieve the Spirit: because they are done in cold blood. David deeply wounded his conscience, and grieved the Spirit, in plotting the death of Uriah, which was the diminution of the credit of David: that the Scripture saith, he was good in all things, except in the matter of Uriah: why? because therein he grieved the Spirit most, in plotting and contriving the cruel murder of so good a man. How can they think they have the Spirit of God, that plot, and undermine men's estates, to have their wills in unjust courses; or if they have the Spirit, can this be without grieving it; for the Spirit will perpetually suggest the contrary.

Again, we grieve the holy Spirit, when we commit such sins, as we might avoid, such sins as we have some helps against, and least provocation unto. It is a general rule, *Quanto major facilitas*, &c. The more the facility of not sinning, the greater the sin. Therefore, when we are tempted to sin, consider what conscience saith: I have been a hearer of the word, what hath the Spirit of God revealed and discovered unto me? He hath shewed that this is a sin: whom do I grieve by the commission of it? The Spirit of God, and wound my own conscience; and then consider, will that, that I sin for, countervail this? Do I not buy my sin too dear? Sins are dearly bought, with the grieving of the Spirit of God: therefore wisely think beforehand what sin will cost.

Men grieve the Spirit, by cavilling against the

truth. The heathen man could say, It is an ill custom to be cavilling against religion, whether in good earnest, or in jest: yet we have a sect, a generation of men, that are of all religions, of no religion, men of a contradictory spirit, that always take the opposite part; that cavil at the truth to shew their parts: this is too ordinary among the wits of the world.

This grieves the holy Spirit also, when men take the office of the Spirit from him, that is, when we will do things in our own strength, and by our own light, as if we were gods to ourselves. Man naturally affects a kind of divinity (it was the fault of Adam), and till God drive him out of himself by his Spirit, and by afflictions, he sets much by his own parts, and wit, and thereupon neglects prayer, and dependance on God, as if the Spirit had nothing to do with his regimen. When men set upon actions in the strength of natural parts, perhaps they may go on in their course as civil men, but never as Christians, to have comfort of their actions, because they will be guides, and gods to themselves. If a man belong to God, God will cross him in such ways wherein he refuseth to honour God, and to give him his due place: he shall miscarry, when, perhaps, other men shall have success, though it be to harden them to destruction. This is a subtle way, by which Satan abuseth men. The life of a Christian is dependant on a higher principle than himself, to rule and guide him.

Another way whereby we commonly grieve the Spirit of God is, when the mind is troubled with a multitude of business; when the soul is like a mill, where one cannot hear another: the noise is such as takes away all intercourse: it diminisheth of our re-

spect to the holy Spirit, when we give way to a multitude of business: for multitude of business begets multitudes of passions and distractions; that when God's Spirit dictates the best things, that tend to our comfort and peace, we have no time to heed what the Spirit adviseth. Therefore we should so moderate our occasions and affairs, that we may be always ready for good suggestions. If a man will be lost, let him loose himself in Christ, and in the things of heaven: for if we be drowned in the world, it will breed discomfort.

Lastly, omission, or slight performance of duties, grieve the Spirit: the Spirit as he comes from the Father and the Son, from God, so he is great in himself, being God; *Offer this to thy king*, saith Malachi, when he saw them come negligently and carelessly to the worship of God; when people hear drowsily, and receive the sacrament unpreparedly: this grieves the Spirit, because it comes from irreverence and disrespect. And the reason why so many are dead-hearted, is because they make no conscience of omissions, of drowsiness, of negligent cold performances. Such Christians what do they differ from carnal men in duties, for they will hear, pray, receive sacraments. He is the best Christian that is the most reverend Christian, the most careful Christian, most jealous over his own heart. Usually those are the richest in grace. Even amongst good men, those that are most careful and watchful over themselves: they go away enriched with the greatest blessing. Therefore let us hear, and so hear, let us receive, and receive *thus, so let us eat of this bread*, &c. The scripture fixeth a reverend respect before duty, suitable to the majesty of the great God, whose business we are about.

Besides grieving God's Spirit in ourselves, there is a heavy guilt lies upon us for grieving the Spirit in others, which is done many ways.

First, by neglecting the grace of God in them, or despising them for some infirmities, which love should cover. Contempt is a thing which the nature of man is more impatient of than of any injury, those that are given this way to wrong others are punished with the common hatred of all.

We likewise grieve the spirit of others, by sharp censures: and the greater our authority is, the deeper is the grief a censure inflicteth: many weak spirits cannot enjoy quiet, while they are exercised with such sharpness. They think themselves excommunicated out of the hearts of those in whose good liking they desire to dwell.

Again, those that are above others, grieve the spirits of those under them by unjust commands: as when masters press their servants to that which their conscience cannot digest, and so make them sin, and offer violence to that tender part.

Again, we grieve the spirit of others when those that are inferior shew themselves untractable to those above them in magistracy or ministry. When they make them spend their strength in vain: thus the Spirit of God in Noah strove with the old world: our duty is, therefore, to walk wisely in regard of others: and if it be a duty to please men in all things lawful in the way of humanity, much more ought we to please Christians in those things wherein we do not displease God; as being joined in communion with them in the same spirit. Yet here we must remember that it is one thing to cross the humour, and offend the pride of another; and another to grieve the

Spirit in him: no cures can be wrought without grief in that kind; and if we grieve not their spirits when such humours prevail in them, we shall grieve our own for neglect of duty.

And in the last place this causeth another grief, when those that are good watch not over their ways: the Spirit is grieved for the reproaches of religion that come from the wicked: for what say they? doth religion and the Spirit teach you this? thus Christians make the name of God to be ill spoken of; and this grieves the Spirit, and will grieve them if they belong to God. Oh wretch that I am, that I should open the mouths of others and grieve the Spirit of God, not only in myself, but in others, because he is grieved by me!

Scandalous courses: either by unreasonable use of our liberty; without respect to the weakness of others; or by actions that are in themselves evil, or of ill report; by such actions we grieve the spirits of others. An ill example always either grieveth or infecteth. The spirit of Lot was grieved for the unclean conversation of the Sodomites, which no question hastened their ruin.

How shall we know when we grieve the Spirit? we may know that by the sins before mentioned, as the cause of grief. Again, the Spirit will bring report of its own grief: we may know we have offended a friend when he leaves our company; so we may know we have discontented the Spirit by spiritual desertions, both in respect of assistance in the performance of duties, and resisting temptations, and bearing afflictions; as also in respect of comfort, as when we find a strangeness and dulness of disposition; unless it be from some natural distemper of body, we may fear all is not well.

When we find a proneness to divert to other comforts, and to hold correspondency with carnal persons: and delight not as formerly in the communion of saints, but find an indifferency for any aquaintance. When we drive hardly, and our wheels fall off; when conscience will not let us omit good duties, and yet we want the oil of the Spirit to make us strong and nimble in the performance of them: whereupon they come not off with that acceptance to God or our own spirits. These indispositions shew we have not used the Spirit well, whom otherwise we should find a spirit of strength, a spirit of comfort, a quickening spirit.

The issues of grieving the Spirit will prove very dangerous: for the Spirit may justly leave us to our own spirits and deceitful hearts: which as they are arch-flatterers, so will prove arch-traitors to us, and so let in a worse guest into our souls. The ill spirit is always ready, presently to take possession; who, by joining with the stream of our corruptions, may please us for a time, but will destroy us for ever.

When we grieve the good Spirit of God, and cause him to leave us, our soul is left as a hell: for what is hell but the absence of God, in his favour and mercy?

Again, we cannot grieve the Spirit of God in doing anything against it, but it will grieve us again, and being a spirit, may fill our spirits with that grief that may make our conditions a kind of hell upon earth. Few reprobates feel those terrors here, that the godly oft do by their bold adventures: for besides the terrors of the natural conscience, they have the Spirit to set them on; and that spirit, that had so well deserved of them before: which cannot but increase the

horror and shame. In hell itself, this will be the bitterest torment, to think of refusing mercy, mercy pressed, and offered with all love. A careless spirit oft proves a *wounded spirit*, and that, *who can bear?* until he that woundeth, healeth again by giving grace to afflict ourselves, and wait his good time to take pity of us: that which we say of conscience is true; it is our best friend, and our worst enemy. If a man's conscience be his friend, it will make all friendly to him: it will make God his friend, affliction his friend, nothing can sit at the heart to grieve him. But if a man's conscience turn his enemy, there need no other enemies be sought out, he hath enough in his own heart, his own tormenting conscience tearing itself. This may be as truly said of the Spirit of God, who is above conscience: if we make him not our best friend, we are sure to have him our worst enemy, that sets all other enemies upon us. Displeasure is as the person is: *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who knows the power of his wrath?* it is a powerful wrath, no creature hath power over the Spirit immediately, but this Spirit of spirits, who can fill the soul, the whole soul, and every corner of it, being adequate to the soul, as large as the soul, and larger, he can fill it with wrath that shall burn to hell, and who shall take off the wrath of God, when the Spirit of God sets it on once?

Whence is it that we grieve the Spirit?

Because there is a cursed principle in us, always active, which is not perfectly subdued in this life. Death is the accomplishment of mortification: but while we are here, this corruption in us will always be working. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit:* the flesh is an active busy thing, it bestirs itself: now

when contraries are so near, as the flesh and Spirit, in the same soul: they must needs thwart and grieve one another continually.

It may be demanded how far forth a child of God may grieve the Spirit, and yet remain the child of God?

In answer to this, know that we must not judge of sin by the matter in which, but by the spirit, from which sin is committed. There is no sin so gross, but the saints of God may fall into it, but yet the child of God is hindered by a contrary law of the Spirit from yielding full consent before, or taking full delight in a sin, or *allowing* or *persisting* after. And though in regard of ingratitude, the sin of a godly man admits of a greater aggravation than the sin of others: yet setting that aside, the sin itself of a godly man is less, for his temptations be stronger, and Satan's malice more eager against him, and his resistance of sin greater; all which doth abate the heinousness of the guilt. The more resistance from within argues a stronger party from within, in the godly, the force of sin is broken from within: take a godly man at the worst, there is some work of the Spirit in him, that in some measure is answerable to the counsels and motions of the Spirit without him: the holy Spirit hath some hold in him, by which he doth recover him. A wicked man proceeds from grieving to quenching, and from quenching to resisting. The Spirit hath no party, no side in him, and therefore when the Spirit is gone, farewell he: glad they are, that then they can follow their pleasures and sins without check.

Sometimes God leads his children to heaven through some foul way, by which he lets them see what need they have of washing by the blood and Spirit of Christ;

which otherwise perhaps they would not so much value, when they grieve the Spirit, and the Spirit thereupon grieves them, and that grief proves medicinal; the grief which sin breeds consumes the sin that bred it. We are in covenant with so wise and powerful a God, that overrules even sin itself, to serve his purpose in bringing his to heaven. They have that in them whereby they hate the sin they do, and love the goodness they do not: whereas others hate the good in some respects they do, and love the ill which they dare not commit. Howsoever they are drawn into sin, yet they will never break their conjugal bond betwixt Christ and their souls, so far as that sin should reign in them as a commanding Lord: they will not forsake their oath of allegiance to serve willingly a contrary king. They may presume sometimes upon Christ, thinking they have a balm ready to cure the wound again, as some, to show the virtue of their oils, do make wounds in themselves, the deceitfulness of sin seducing them: but God ever chastiseth this boldness, and taketh such a course with them, that it ends in taking the greater shame to themselves; and by so much as they have been more presumptuous. The loss of comfort, and the sense of sorrow they feel, makes them say *from experience:* that there is nothing gotten by sin, and that it proves bitterness in the end.

Again, though they are not kept from sins, in some sense, presumptuous, yet they are always kept from that *great offence*. Though they may commit *a* sin against the Holy Ghost, yet they can never commit *the* sin against the holy Spirit, because this is a sin of malice after strong conviction: expressed in words dipped in malice by a *tongue set on fire by hell*, and in actions coming from an opposite spirit, and tending to

opposition, and to bitter persecution, if their malice be not greater than their power. And it ends always in impenitency, by reason they despise that grace, and cast away that potion whereby they should recover: their pride will not stoop to God's way.

Thirdly, after such fearful relapses, darkness in the understanding, and rebellion in the will increaseth, sin grows stronger, and they weaker and weaker to resist.

Fourthly, Satan being once cast out by some degree of illumination and reformation, brings *seven devils* after, *worse than himself*: when they see their former courses stand not with their lusts and hopes, they take a contrary course, and so fall to bitterness in the end.

There is a double miscarriage about this sin: some are too head-long in their censures of others, whereas the greater the sin is, the greater caution should be in fastening it upon any, especially whose spirits we are not thoroughly acquainted withal; considering so many things must meet in this sin.

The second miscarriage is in an ungrounded censure of ourselves: there be three things that fear frees us from the danger of. First, fear lest the time of our conversion be past, because we have so often grieved the Spirit: whereas if their time were past, they would be given up to a careless security. A second is fear of some judgment which God stirs up in the heart to prevent the judgment that we may not feel that we fear, because fear stirs up care, and care stirs up diligence to avoid what we fear: a third is, *fear* lest we have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which shews we have not committed that sin; it is never committed but without fear, and

with delight. In these cases we need fear them least, that fear themselves most.

The fourth point is, what course we should take to prevent this grieving of the Spirit?

Let us give up the government of our souls to the Spirit of God; it is for our safety so to do, as being wiser than ourselves, who are unable to direct our own way: it is our liberty to be under a wisdom and goodness larger than our own. Let the Spirit think in us, desire in us, pray in us, live in us, do all in us: labour ever to be in such a frame as we may be fit for the Spirit to work upon; as Nazianzen saith of himself, *Lord, I am an instrument for thee to touch.* A musical instrument though in tune soundeth nothing, unless it be touched; let us lay ourselves open to the Spirit's touch. Thus St. Paul lived not, but Christ lived in him: this requires a great deal of self-denial, to put ourselves thus upon the guidance of the Spirit; but if we knew what enemies we are to ourselves, it would be no such hard matter.

Secondly, study to walk perfectly in obeying the Spirit in all things, which requires much circumspection in knowing and regarding our ways: and then we shall find the Spirit ready to close with us, and tell us, *This is the way, walk in it:* and upon obedience we shall find the Spirit encouraging us by a secret intimation, that this or that is well done. Thus Paul was said to be *bound in Spirit*, the Spirit so put him on, that he could not withstand the motions until the execution of it. We must take especial heed of slighting any motion, as being the Spirit's messenger: they are God's ambassadors sent to make way for God into our hearts, therefore give them entertainment. Many men rather than they will be troubled

with holy motions, stifle them in the birth, as harlots, that to avoid the pain of child-birth, kill their fruit in the womb: let us take heed of murdering these births of the Spirit. But seeing Satan will oft interrupt good motions by good motions, that he may hinder both:

How shall we know from whence the motions come?

When two good motions arise, seeming diverse, the Spirit of God carries strong to one, and that is from God, more than to the other. Good motions are either raised up in us, or sent unto us, by the Spirit; both these, if they be raised by the Spirit, will carry us to God: they will rise as high as the spring is whence they come; what ariseth from ourselves, endeth in ourselves.

Those motions that the Spirit stirs up from within, come from sanctified judgment and estimation of what they are moved to; other motions are hasty, and gone before they have their errand: holy motions are constant, as strengthened from constant grace within, till they see the issue of what they are moved to: other motions are like lightning, and sudden flashes, that leave the soul more dark and amazed than before. Holy motions are answerable to the duties of our calling: other motions oft lead us out of the compass of our calling.

The Spirit moveth in the godly, first by a dwelling in them, and working in them gracious abilities, and then draws forth those abilities to good actions. But the Spirit dwelleth not in others, nor produceth any sanctified abilities in them, but only moveth them sometimes to good actions, without changing of them.

The holy Spirit's motions are seasonable: other motions oft press upon us, to disturb a holy duty. The breath of the Spirit in us is suitable to the Spirit's breathing in the Scriptures: the same Spirit doth not breathe contrary motions.

Motions of the Spirit, when they come in favour, carry their own evidence with them, as light doth. The motions of the Spirit are sweet and mild, and lead us gently on; they are not ordinarily violent raptures. Removing the soul from itself, but leave in the soul a judgment of them, and of other things.

Again, the Spirit moveth us so to duties of religion, as agree with civil honesty, and charity to our neighbours. Those therefore know not what spirit they are of, who, under a pretence of zeal, will be uncivil, and cruel, shewing they are not led by that Spirit that appeared in the shape of a dove. Both tables in this are one, that they come from one spirit: and *the second is like the first*, and requires love. And because all graces and duties come from the same spirit, therefore one duty never crosses another; but the wisdom of the Spirit moves to all holy duties in their several and suitable places.

Motions for the matter good, yet may be carnal, in regard of self-confidence from whence they come. That which Peter resolved upon was good, but confidence in himself marred it: those motions which the Spirit stirs up, are carried along in relying upon assisting grace. So much for that question.

Again, if we would not grieve the Spirit, let us take heed of being wanting to the Spirit's direction. The flesh here will make a froward objection, *We can do no more than we can?*

The Spirit is always beforehand with us, preventing

us with some knowledge, and some ability, which, if we join with the Spirit in putting forth, the Spirit is ready to concur with us, and lead us further. And our conscience will tell us so much, that if we do otherwise; it is not for want of present assistance, or privity, that the Spirit will deny us strength if we put ourselves upon it: our own hearts, though deceitful, will tell us that we do what we do out of willingness; preferring some seeming good before the motion of the Spirit. Herein we carry in our conscience, that which will quit God, and condemn ourselves. There is not the worst man, whose heart runs away from God, but God follows him a great while with sweet motions, though such be the invincible stubbornness of the heart, that it will not yield: this will take away all excuse, as St. Austin argues well. If I had known, saith a wicked man, I would not have done thus: saith he, the pride of thy heart suggests that, hadst thou not motions and admonitions that told thee the danger of it? if the Spirit, even in the worst actions, concur so far as they are actions and motions; may we not think that he is much more ready to concur with holy motions, stirred up first by himself? if the Spirit be willing to concur in natural actions, much more in spiritual, whereunto itself is the first mover; the Spirit leaves not us, till we leave the Spirit.

When the Spirit suggests good motions, turn them presently into holy resolutions. Is this my duty, and that which tends to my comfort? certainly I will do it. Let not these motions die in us. How many holy motions are kindled in hearing the word, and receiving the sacraments, &c. which die as soon as they are kindled, for want of resolution; therefore let us not give over till these motions be turned into

purposes; and those good purposes ripened to holy actions, that they be not nipped in the blossom, but may bring forth perfect fruit. Let us labour to improve these talents, to the end for which they are sent: are they motions of comfort? let us use them for comfort: are they motions tending to duty? let us make conscience to do our duty: let not our despairing hearts cross the Spirit in his comforts, nor stand out stubbornly as enemies against our duty, for that is to cross God, and to nip his motions in the bud.

Let the spirit have full scope both in the ordinances and in the motions stirred up by the ordinances, this is the way to make the ordinances and the times glorious; but the liberties of the gospel are contrary to the liberties of the flesh: it turneth all things upside down, and men out of themselves. Hence is it that there is nothing so much opposed by the spirit of the world, as the purity and power of the gospel, which is a sufficient prejudice of an ill condition that all such men are in. But there is another spirit in gracious men, they are the children of light, and love it. If we would not grieve the Spirit, we must be willing to bring ourselves under all advantages of the Spirit's working; as conversing with those that are spiritual, and especially attending on those ordinances wherein the Spirit breatheth: wherein we may meet the Spirit. The walks of God's Spirit are, in the means of salvation, hearing the Word preached, and holy communion one with another: the Word and Spirit go together, therefore, if we will have the comforts of the Spirit, we must attend upon the Word. Men grieve the Spirit by neglecting the Word, and holy conference, &c. It is with the Word and Spirit, as with the veins and arteries: the veins have arteries, that as the veins carry the blood, the arteries

carry the spirits to quicken the blood. The Word is dead without the Spirit, and therefore attend on the Word; and then wait on the Spirit to quicken the Word; that both Word and Spirit may guide us to life everlasting. Motions of this kind come from the Spirit: as it is said of old Simeon, that he came by the motion of the Spirit into the temple. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day: our manna falls most then, Christ's Spirit and Word dwell together in the heart: therefore the apostle useth the dwelling of Christ in us, and the Word, indefinitely. Faith wrought by the Word lays hold upon Christ, and brings him into the soul, and keeps him there. It is a blessed thing, when the Spirit in the ordinance, and the Spirit in our hearts meet together: this is the way to feed and cherish the Spirit in us, and to put oil as it were into the lamp: because the Spirit, as it is in us, is thus nourished, even as the fire, though in its own element, feedeth upon nothing, yet with us here below, it is maintained with fuel, otherwise dieth and goeth out. Take heed of slighting any help of faith, that God affords us, as wicked Ahaz, *Isaiah* vii. God offered him for the strengthening of his faith, a sign from heaven, or from earth, or any other creature: oh no, he would not tempt God; he seemed a pious man, he would not tempt God; but what saith the prophet? *Is it little for you to despise me, but you will grieve God?* insinuating, that when we despise those helps God hath given, we grieve the Spirit of God. Those that neglect the Word and sacrament, what do they despise, a poor minister? and neglect bread and wine? no, they despise God himself, who knows better than ourselves what need we have of these helps.

Again, when we find the Spirit not assisting and comforting as in former times, it is fit to search the cause, which we shall find; some slighting of holy motions, or the means of breeding of them, or yielding to some corruption which we are more especially addicted unto, or some sin unrepented of, which we take no notice of. It is good therefore to search our souls to the bottom: there may be some hidden corruption lying in the soul, which may undermine our grace and comfort: there may be a privy thief that robs us of all. And besides beloved and secret sins: it is good to bethink ourselves of old sins, which perhaps hitherto we have but outwardly thought of: and God is willing by some deadness and trouble of spirit, to mind us of renewing of sorrow for them: for want of strict accounting with ourselves, God calls us to these arrearages and back reckonings, as we see in Joseph's brethren. If we find not that sweetness of communion with the Spirit that formerly we enjoyed, bethink ourselves when and wherein we lost it, that we may meet the Spirit again in these ways wherein we found him before we lost him, and take heed of those courses, in the entrance of which we found the Spirit leaving us.

Again, take heed of little sins, which we count lesser sins perhaps than God doth. We weigh sin in our own balance, and not in his, whereas no sin is to be accounted little: for if it were once set upon the conscience, and the wrath opened due unto it; it would take all comfort from us. And therefore we must judge of sin, as the Spirit doth, if we would not grieve the Spirit: as the communion of the Spirit is of all the sweetest, so the preserving of it requires most exact watchfulness, and through understanding

of ourselves. Take heed of the beginning of sin, when any lust ariseth, pray it down presently, say nay to it, let it have no consent, be presently humbled, otherwise we are endangered by yielding to grieve, by grieving to resist, by resisting to quench, by quenching maliciously to oppose the Spirit: sin hath no bounds but those which the Spirit puts, whom therefore we should not grieve. And let us look to the head and spring of sins, whereby we grieve the Spirit of God, not to the sin so much, as to the root. We are angry with ourselves for being passionate, but what is the cause of passion? It comes from pride. Jonas was a passionate man, in that measure that he was passionate he was proud: he was loath to be shamed when he had said, *Nineveh shall be destroyed*, he thought upon the sparing of them, he should be discredited; and he preferred his credit before the destruction of a populous city. So there is much depraving and detraction in the world, and thereupon brawls, and breaches. What is the cause? a spirit of envy and oftimes a spirit of pride. So men run into the danger of others, by wronging them; what is the cause? worldliness, base earthly-mindedness. Men think not of the root of sin, but dwell upon the act done: we should be led from the remote streams to the spring and source of all, and bewail that especially.

This care will be helped by spiritual wisdom, whereby we may discern both wherein we *have* grieved the Spirit, and wherein for the time to come we may. We cannot maintain friendship in perfect and sweet terms with any, whose disposition we know not, what will please or displease them; therefore we should study the nature and delight of the Spirit, and wherein we are prone both to forget ourselves and

the Spirit. We esteem not much the friendship of those who are so much friends to themselves, as they pass not much whether friends be contented or discontented. The Spirit dwells most largely in that heart that hath emptied itself of itself: the Israelites felt not the sweetness of manna, till they had spent their flesh-pots and other provision of Egypt. The nature of God's Spirit is holy; as it is holy, so delighteth only in holy temples: those therefore that set up any *idol of jealousy* in their souls against God, that do not *preserve their vessels in holiness*, cannot think of any communion with the Spirit. The Spirit is jealous of our affections, and will have nothing set up in the heart above God; though the Spirit stoops to dwell in us, yet we must not forget the respect due to so great a Superior, but reverently entertain whatever comes from him. Reverence and obedience is the carriage due to a superior, and where this distance is not kept, a breach will follow. We should reverence ourselves for the Spirit's sake, and think ourselves too good for any base lust to lodge in; that heart that the Spirit hath taken for itself should turn off all contrary motions with abomination: what should pride, and envy, and passion do in a heart consecrated to the spirit of meekness and holiness?

Upon any breach, we must first look by renewing repentance, and faith in Christ to renew our peace with God, before we can expect the grace and comfort of the Spirit. For as the Spirit cometh from the Father and the Son, and is procured by the death and satisfaction of the Son to the Father, without which we could never have expected the gift of the Spirit: so still we must have an eye to this satisfaction by Christ, and reconciliation through it, before we can

recover communion with the Spirit, as being the best fruit of the love of God reconciled through Christ. We see David in the fifty-first psalm, first importunes God for mercy again and again, and then for the Spirit, and for the *joy of salvation.*

And take heed that nothing come in, nor go out of our souls that may grieve the Spirit of God: some things come in to us that grieve the Spirit: the corruptions we receive from others: some things come out of our hearts that grieve God's Spirit, as corrupt thoughts, and speeches, that indeed is the scope of this place, *Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouths*, &c. and then follows, *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God.* And after again he saith, *let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour be laid aside;* insinuating that one way of grieving the Spirit is by ill and corrupt language. We can never talk with company that is not spiritual, but they will either vex, and grieve us, or taint, and defile us; unless it be in such exigencies of our calling as requires our converse with them. But I speak of a voluntary choice of such as savour not good things. Many men to please their own carnal spirits, and the carnal spirits of others, they vent that that is against conscience, and against that that is higher than conscience, a more divine principle, the holy Spirit of God: loose carnal speakers are people void of the power of religion.

Let no man say, Here is ado indeed, duty upon duty, this will make our life troublesome.

The life of a Christian is an honourable, a comfortable, sweet life: indeed it requires the most care, and watchfulness of any life in the world, being the best life, it is begun here, and accomplished in an everlasting life in heaven. Nothing in this world, neither our estates, nor our favour with great persons,

can be preserved without watchfulness: and shall we think to preserve the chief happiness of our souls without it, having so many enemies without and within that labour to draw us into a cursed condition?

Therefore to stir us up to the practice of these duties, that we may give contentment to so sweet a guest, consider what reason we have to regard the Spirit, and his motions, from the good we have by them.

The holy Spirit of God is our guide: who will displease his guide? A sweet comfortable guide that leads us through the wilderness of this world; as the cloud before the Israelites by day, and the pillar of fire by night: so he conducts us to the heavenly Canaan; if we grieve our guide, we cause him to leave us to ourselves. The Israelites would not go a step further than God by his angel went before them. It is in vain for us to make toward heaven without our blessed guide; we cannot do, nor speak, nor think anything that is holy and good without him: whatsoever is holy, and pious, it grows not in our garden, in our nature, but it is planted by the Spirit.

There is nothing in the world so great and sweet a friend that will do us so much good as the Spirit, if we give him entertainment. Indeed he must rule, he will have the keys delivered to him, we must submit to his government. And when he is in the heart, he will subdue by little and little all high thoughts, rebellious risings, and despairing fears. This shall be our happiness in heaven, when we shall be wholly spiritual, that *God shall be all in all;* we shall be perfectly obedient to the Spirit in our understandings, wills, and affections. The Spirit will then dwell largely in us, and will make the room where he dwelleth sweet, and lightsome, and free, subduing whatsoever is contrary; and bring fulness of peace, and joy, and

comfort. And in the meantime in what condition soever we are, we shall have suitable help from the Spirit. We are partly flesh, and partly spirit, God is not all in all, the flesh hath a part in us, we are often in afflictions, and under clouds. Let us therefore prize our fellowship with the Spirit. For are we in darkness? he is a Spirit of light: are we in deadness of spirit? he is a Spirit of life: are we in a disconsolate estate? he is a Spirit of consolation: are we in perplexity, and know not what to do? he is a Spirit of wisdom: are we troubled with corruptions? he is a sanctifying, a subduing, a mortifying Spirit: in what condition soever we are, he will never leave us, till he hath raised us from the grave, and taken full possession of body and soul in heaven; he will prove a comforter, when neither friends, nor riches, nor anything in the world can comfort us. How careful should we be to give contentment to this sweet Spirit of God?

No Christian is so happy as the watchful Christian that is careful of his duty, and to preserve his communion with the holy Spirit of God: for by entertaining him, he is sure to have communion with the Father and the Son. It is the happiest condition in the world, when the soul is the temple of the holy Spirit, when the heart is as the holy of Holies, where there be prayers and praises offered to God. The soul is as it were a holy ark, the memory like the pot of manna preserving heavenly truths. It is a heavenly condition, a man prospers to heavenward, when the Spirit of God is with him. You know Obed-Edom, when the ark was in his house, all thrived with him: so while the Spirit and his motions are entertained by us, we shall be happy in life, happy in death, happy to eternity. For it is he.

By which you are sealed to the day of redemption.

The apostle sealeth this grave admonition by an argument taken from the Spirit's sealing of them to the day of redemption.

We are all by nature in bondage to sin, and corruption: we all are redeemed from sin by the first coming of Christ, and are to be redeemed from corruption by the second.

There is a day appointed for this glorious work.

In the meantime God would have us assured of it aforehand.

This assurance is by sealing.

And this sealing is by the Spirit, none else need do it, no meaner person can do it.

And what respect is due to the Spirit, for doing so gracious a work, that we grieve him not; and not only so, but that we endeavour so to please him, as he may with delight go on with this blessed work that it hath pleased him to take upon him.

As the duty is spiritual, so the arguments that enforce it are spiritual; and the argument here is fetched from that which hath a most constraining force; love expressed in the sweetest fruit of it, and the stability of it sealing, and sealing to the day of redemption, as if the apostle should reason thus; God the Father hath ordained you to salvation by the redemption of Christ his Son, and that you might have the comfort of it in the way to it against all discouragements you may meet with; the Holy Ghost hath assured you of it, and set his seal upon you, as those that are set apart for so great salvation: that the sense of this love might breed love in you again, and love breed a care out of ingenuity, not to offend so gracious a Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT BY WHICH YOU ARE SEALED.

THE Holy Ghost delighteth to speak in our own language: we cannot rise to him, therefore he stoopeth to us.

This sealing is either sealing of persons, or of good things intended to the persons. Sealing is not only a witnessing to us, but a work upon us, and in us, carrying the image of Him that sealeth us, whereby we are not only assured of the good promised to us, but fitted for the receiving of it. God prepareth no good for any but whom he prepares and fits for that good. There is not only an outward authorising of the great grants we have by promise, oath, and sacrament; but an inward, by the Spirit: persuading of our interest in them, and working that which doth authorise us to lay claim unto them after the use of a seal, both in confirmation and representation, and resemblance of him that sealed,

The persons sealed are, first, Christ, and then those that are given to Christ. Christ is sealed,

1. By the Father, Christ was ordained by him to be a Saviour in our nature, predestinate to be the head of the Church. Wherefore he often saith he came to do his Father's will. *Him hath the Father sealed*, John vi. 27, anointing him, calling him, setting him forth, sanctifying him by the Spirit, and every way fitting him with all grace to be a Saviour.

2. He was sealed, by the fulness of the Godhead

dwelling in flesh, abased, and exalted for us, so as his flesh is the flesh of the Son of God, and his blood the *blood of God.*

3. Sealed by a testimony from heaven of all three persons: by the *Father, This is my well beloved Son,* Acts xx. 28: by the holy Spirit descending like a dove: by himself, to his human nature dwelling in all fulness in it. Christ is sealed by miracles done upon him, and by him, by his baptizing and installing into his office, and by giving himself up to shed his blood for sin, by which blood the covenant is established and sealed.

4. In being justified in the Spirit, being raised from the dead, and *declared thereby to be the Son of God mightily with power,* Rom. i. 4, and then advanced him to the right hand of God, that through him our faith and trust might be in God, 1 *Pet.* i. 14, and appearing there for ever for us, sheweth not only his ability and willingness to save us, but that it is done already: we may see all whatever we can look for to ourselves performed in our head, to our comfort.

As Christ was sealed and fitted for us, so we are sealed and fitted for Christ. There is a privy seal in predestination, this is known only to God himself: *The Lord knoweth who are his.* And this knowledge of God of us, is carried secret, as a river under ground, until his calling of, and separating us from the rest of men. When first by his spirit he convinceth us of what we are in ourselves, and of our cursed condition; and thereby layeth us low by sorrow and humiliation for sin, as the greatest evil. And then a pardon is more to us than a crown; then we will wait for mercy, and continue so, and beg for mercy, and that upon Christ's own condition, by de-

nying and renouncing any thing of our own, then Christ is Christ unto us. Indeed after this, it pleaseth Christ by his Spirit to open *a door of hope*, and give some hints of mercy, and to let in some beams of love; and withal to raise up the soul by a spirit of faith, to close with particular mercy opened and offered by the Spirit, whereby the soul sealeth to the truth of the promise, *He that believeth hath set to his seal that God is true*, John iii. 33. It is strange, that God should stoop so low as to receive, as it were, confirmation by our belief: but thus God condescends in the phrase of scripture; as we are said to help God, *curse ye Meroz, because they came not to help the Lord*, &c. God stoops to be helped by us, and to have his truth, and power, and goodness ratified, and confirmed by us, when we believe the promise of God in Christ, though it be by the help of the Spirit, we seal God's truth. And then God honoureth that sealing of ours, by the sealing of his Spirit; *after you believed, you were sealed*, saith the apostle; that is, the gracious love of Christ was further confirmed to them. God honours no grace so much as faith; why? because it honours God most of all others; it gives God the honour of his mercy, and goodness, and wisdom, and power, and of his truth; especially he that believes in God, by believing seals that God is true, and God honours that soul again by sealing it to the day of redemption: God hath promised, *Those that honour me, I will honour.* Therefore, *He that believeth hath the witness in himself*, that grace promised, belongeth to him, for he carries in his heart the counterpane of the promises; he that confesseth and believeth shall have mercy. I believe, saith the soul, therefore the promise belongs to me, my faith an-

swering God's love in the promise, witnesseth so much to me. The Spirit not only revealeth Christ, and the promises in general, but in attending upon the ordinances by a heavenly light: the Spirit discovers to us our interest in particular, and saith to the soul, God is thy salvation; and enableth the soul to say, I am God's: *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.* Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. Whence came this voice of Saint Paul? It was the still voice of the Spirit of God; that, together with the general truth in the gospel, discovered in particular Christ's love to him. It is not a general faith that will bring to heaven, but there is a special work of the Spirit, in the use of means, discovering and sealing the good will of God to us, that he intends good unto us; and thereupon our hearts are persuaded to believe in God, and to love God as our God, and Christ as our Christ.

This is excellently set down in the sweet communion of marriage, the Spirit is the *paranymphos*, the procurer of the marriage, between Christ and the soul. Now it is not sufficient to know that God and Christ bear good will to all believers, though that be the ground and general foundation of all, and a great preparative to the special sealing of the Spirit, but then the Spirit comes, and saith, Christ hath a special good will to me, and stirs up in me a liking to him again, to take him upon his own conditions, with conflict of corruptions, with the scorns of the world, &c. Whereupon the mutual marriage is made up between Christ and us: this work is the sealing of the Spirit.

Many are the privileges of a Christian from this his sealing, as the use of a seal in man's affairs is manifold.

1. Seals serve for confirmation and allowance, to that purpose measures are sealed: *God is said to seal instruction*, Job xxxiii. 16. Confirmation is either by giving strength, or by the authority of such as are able to make good what they promise; and also willing, which they show by putting to their seal, which hath as much strength to confirm him to whom the promise is made, as he hath will and power to make it good that hath engaged himself. Amongst men, there is the writing, and the seal to the writing; when the seal is added to the writing, there is a perfect ratification: so there are abundance of gracious promises in the Scriptures; now when the Spirit comes and seals them to the soul, then they are sure to us; the Spirit puts the seal to the promises.

2. The use of it likewise is for distinction, from others that carry not that mark. So the sealing of the Spirit distinguisheth a Christian from all other men. There is a distinction between men in God's eternal purpose, but that concerns not us to meddle with, further than to know it in general. God *knoweth who are his*, 1 Tim. 2, and who are not his; but in time the holy Spirit distinguisheth, and ranks men as they were distinguished before all worlds, and as they shall be at the day of judgment: the beginning of *that* distinction that shall be afterward is in this life.

A seal maketh the impression of an image; the prince's image useth to be in his seal: so is God's image in his, which destroyeth the old image and print that was in us before. Holy and good men by this work of the Spirit are distinguished,

1. From civil men, by the work of holiness, which mere civil men have not at all, but despise.

And secondly, from seeming good men, by the

depth of that work, the Spirit of God works a new nature in them, whereby they are distinguished. Now nature in every creature is carried to one thing more than to another. There is a distinct propension in a good man, to God, to grace and goodness, his aims and bent are distinct: and thereupon he hath a greater enlargement of heart suitable to his great aims; he looks above the world and worldly men; they are narrow, low, base spirited men, the best of them.

Again, things by nature work from within: herein painted hypocrites are distinguished from a true substantial Christian: he works from a principle within, another man is moved as the *automata*, things of motion, clocks and the like, engines of wit, that move from a weight without that poiseth them. If they do any good, it is from somewhat without that swayeth their aims and ends, and not from an inward principle; nature works from an inward principle; light things go upward, and heavy things downward, naturally: artificial things are forced. Thus good men are distinguished from those that are seemingly holy; there is a new nature wrought in them.

Again, nature is constant; what is done naturally is done constantly: heavy bodies go always downward, and light bodies upward: every creature works according to his nature; a holy man is exercised in holiness constantly, because he doth it from an inward principle, from a work and stamp within. Different things may seem the same; as wild herbs may have the colour and form of those that are planted in the garden; but there is difference in the virtue of them: the seeming graces and actions of a hypocrite, they have no virtue in them; as there are some drugs without virtue, dead things. But there is a

distinguishing virtue in the faith of a Christian, whereby he overcomes the world and his lusts, whereby he doth all duties, prays, and hears, and is fruitful in his conversation; in all his graces there is a comforting strengthening virtue. True gold hath the virtue to comfort and strengthen the heart, that alchymy gold hath not. True grace hath a working comforting virtue. Another man's formal artificial actions have no virtue in them, neither is it intended, they being only put on to serve a turn. Two men may do the same things, and yet there be a grand difference; the one doing them from the seal of the Spirit, from a deeper die and stamp of the Spirit: the other if from the Spirit, yet it is but from a common work at the best. Some dies cannot bear the weather, but alter colour presently; but there are others that having something that give a deeper tincture will hold. The graces of a true Christian hold out in all kind of weathers, in winter and summer, prosperity and adversity; when superficial counterfeit holiness will give out: thus we see the seal of the Spirit serves for distinction.

The use of a seal is likewise for appropriation. Merchants use to seal their wares they would not have others have any right unto.

A Christian is God's in a more peculiar manner than others; there is not only a witness of the Spirit that God is his, but the Spirit works in him an assent to take God again: there is a mutual appropriation, *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine*, Cant. vi; when the soul can say, *thou art my God*, it is not frustrate; because God saith before, *I am thy salvation:* where the Spirit seals, God appropriates: *God chooseth the righteous man to himself*, Psal. iv.

And we may know this appropriation by appropriating God again; *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and what have I in earth in comparison of thee*, Psal. lxxiii. There is no action that God works upon the soul, but there is a reflect action by the Spirit to God again. If God choose and love us, we choose and love him again. God appropriates us first: we are his, and we are Christ's; we are God's, because he hath given Christ for us; we are Christ's, because he hath given himself for us; we are, as the Apostle saith, a people of acquisition, *a people purchased*, purchased at a dear rate by the blood of Christ: those that are Christ's, the Spirit appropriates them: this appropriation is by sealing.

Again, we use to set our seal only upon that we have some estimation of; *set me as a seal*, saith the Church in the Canticles, *upon thy right hand;* have me in thy eye and mind, as a special thing thou valuest.

The witness and work of the Spirit shows God's estimation of us: the Scripture is abundant in setting forth the great price that God sets on his children; they are his children, his spouse, his friends, his portion, his treasure, his coin; he sets his mark, his likeness on them; they are things hallowed and consecrated, they are first-fruits. *Israel is a holy thing*, Jer. ii. 3; their titles show the esteem that God hath of them; he values them more than all the world besides, which are as chaff and dross. *The righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour.* As there is a difference of excellency between precious stones and other common stones, between fruitful and barren trees, so there is amongst men: and in this regard God sets a higher esteem upon some, and thence it is that they have those honourable and glorious titles in

Scripture, of *sons*, *heirs*, *kings*, and *co-heirs with Christ:* when others are termed dross, and dung, and thorns, and have all the base terms that may be.

Now this estimation, by sealing, is known to us by the grace God works in us: common gifts and privileges, and favours of the world, are no seal of God's estimation. If God should give a man kingdoms, and great monarchies, it seals not God's love to him at all; but when God makes a man a spiritual king to rule over his base lusts, this is a seal of God's valuing him above other men. Therefore we should learn how to value others and ourselves, not by common things that castaways may have, but by the stamp of God set on us by the Spirit, which is an argument that God intends to lay us up as coin for another treasury, for heaven. It is the common grand error of the times, to be led with false evidences. Many think God loves them, because he spares them, and follows them with long patience, and makes them thrive in the world. Alas, are these fruits of God's special love? What grace hath he wrought in thy heart by his Spirit? *he gives his Spirit to them that pray;* insinuating, that next the gift of his Son, the greatest gift is the Spirit, to fashion and fit us to be members of his Son: this is an argument of God's love and esteem.

Seals likewise are used for secrecy, as in letters, &c., so this seal of the Spirit is a secret work. God knoweth who are his; they are only known to him and to their own hearts: *the white stone is only known to him that hath it,* and *the hidden manna,* Rev. iii: none so infallibly can know the state in grace, as those that have the gracious work themselves. Holy men in some degree are known one to another, to

make the communion of saints the sweeter: there is a great deal of spiritual likeness in Christians, *face answereth to face;* that one hath strong confidence of the salvation of another: but the undoubted certainty of a man's estate is known only to God and his own soul; nay, sometimes it is hidden from a man's self; there are so many infirmities, and abasements, and troubles in the world, that this life is called a hidden life in Scripture: *our life is hid with Christ in God:* it is unknown to the saints themselves sometimes, and the world alway: *they neither know him that begets, nor them that are begotten.*

Hence likewise the use of a seal is to show that things should be kept *inviolable:* hereupon the Church is as a *sealed fountain;* sealing shows a care of preservation from common annoyance; hereupon likewise it is, that sealing is the securing of persons or things sealed from hurt. No man will violate a letter, because it is sealed: the tomb where Christ was buried was sealed, and the prison doors upon Daniel, that none might meddle with them: so the Spirit of God, by this work of sealing, secures God's children, as the blood sprinkled upon the posts of the doors of the Israelites secured them from the destroying angel. In *Ezek.* ix. there was a mark set upon those that were to be preserved, that secured them; and in *Revel.* vii. the sealed ones must not be hurt. So where the seal of the Spirit is, it is an argument that God means to preserve such a one from eternal destruction, and from prevailing dangers in this world. They are God's sealed ones, no man can hurt them without wrong to God himself, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.* And likewise from devouring sins, and dangerous apostasy:

a man that is truly sealed by the Spirit of God, he never becomes a member of Antichrist, a stigmatized papist, for Antichrist hath his seal too, he is kept from soul-murdering errors, he hath this security upon him by the work and witness of God's Spirit. Whatsoever the use is, or can be, of a seal in man's affairs, that God will have us make use of in his heavenly intercourse betwixt him and us.

Whereby you are sealed.

Now there are divers degrees of the Spirit's sealing.

1. Faith: *He that believes hath the witness in himself,* 1 John v. 10; he carries in his heart the counterpane of all the promises. This grace is first planted in the heart, and answereth to God's love and purpose towards us of giving eternal life: the seal and first discovery of election is manifested to us in our believing, *Acts* xiii. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* This believing is also a seal to us, in that it is of those gifts that *accompany salvation*, of which God never repents him by calling back again, it is a *seed that abideth for ever.*

2. The work of sanctifying grace upon the heart is a seal; whom the spirit sanctifieth, he saveth. *The Lord knoweth who are his:* but how shall we know it? By this seal. *Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity:* not only in heart and affection, but in conversation, and that shall be a seal of his sonship to him; none are children of God by adoption, but those that are children also by regeneration: none are heirs of heaven, but they are new-born to it. Blessed be God, the Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us anew to an inheritance immortal, &c. This seal of sanctification leaves upon the soul the likeness of Jesus Christ, even grace for grace.

But because in time of desertion and temptation we are in a mist, and cannot read our own faith, and our own graces, it pleaseth Christ after some trial and exercise to shine upon his own graces in the heart, whereby we may know we believe, and know we love: until which time the heart sees nothing that is good, and seems to be nothing but all objections, and doubtings. We may be sometimes in such a state as Paul and his company were in the ship, *Acts* xxvii. 20, when they saw neither sun nor stars many days together, almost past all hope. So a Christian may for many days together see neither sun nor star, neither light in God's countenance, nor light in his own heart, no grace issuing from God, no grace carrying the soul to God, though even at that time God darts some beam through those clouds upon the soul: the soul again by a spirit of faith, sees some light through those thickest clouds, enough to keep the soul from utter despair, though not to settle it in peace.

In this dark condition, if they do as Saint Paul and his company did, cast anchor even in the dark night of temptation, and pray still for day; God will appear, and all shall clear up, we shall see light without, and light within: the day-star will arise in their hearts.

Though by reflecting upon our souls we are able to discern a spirit of faith, God may hide himself from the soul in regard of comfort: nay, a Christian may know himself to be in the state of grace, and yet be in an afflicted condition. As in Job's case, he knew

his Redeemer lived, and he resolved to trust in him even though he killed him; he knew he was no hypocrite; he knew his graces were true: and for all the imputations of his friends, they could not dispute him out of his sincerity; you shall not take my uprightness from me. Yet for the present he saw no light from heaven, till it pleased God to reveal himself in special favour to him. There is always peace and joy in believing, yet not in that degree which gives the soul content, until by honouring God in believing and waiting still his good time, he honoureth us with further sense of his favour, and poureth forth his Spirit to us, manifesting his special love towards us: and this is a further degree of sealing of us, confirming us more strongly than before.

The reason why we can neither have grace to believe, nor know we believe; nor when we know we believe, enjoy comfort without a fresh new act of the Spirit, is because the whole carriage of a soul to heaven is above nature, where the Spirit makes a stand, we stand and can go no further; we cannot conclude from right grounds without some help of the Spirit, some doubts, some fears will hinder the application to ourselves, even as those that live in some damnable sin cannot but grant that those that live in such a sin shall never inherit heaven: and their conscience tells them they live in such a sin, yet self-love blinds them so, that they will not conclude against themselves that they shall be damned; so true believers cannot conclude for themselves without divine light and help.

It pleaseth God thus to keep every degree and act of sealing in his own hand, to keep us in a perpetual dependance upon him, and to awe us, that we should not grieve the Spirit of grace, and cause him to suspend either act of grace or comfort.

Joy and strong comfort come from a superadded seal of the Spirit. The works of the Spirit are of a double kind: either in us by imprinting sanctifying grace; or upon us, by shining upon our souls in sweet feelings of joy: what the Spirit worketh in us is more constant, as a new nature which is always like itself, and worketh uniformly: but comfort and joy are of the nature of such privileges as God vouchsafeth at one time, and not another, to some, and not to others.

This degree of sealing in regard of joy hath its degrees likewise: sometimes it is so clear and strong, that the soul questioneth not its state in grace ever after, but passeth on in a triumphant manner to that glory it looks for. Sometimes after this sealing there may be interrupting of comfortable communion so far as to question our condition: yet this calling into question comes not from the Spirit, which where it once witnesseth for us, never witnesseth against us, but it is a fruit of the flesh not fully subdued, it is a sin itself, and usually a fruit of some former sin. For howsoever we should not doubt after a former witness of the Spirit, yet there will be so much weakening the sense of our assurance, as there is yielding to any lust. The knowledge of our estate in grace and comfort thereupon, though it may be weakened by neglect of our watchfulness, yet still it hath the force of an argument to assure us when the Spirit pleaseth to direct us to make use of it, because God's love varies not as our feeling doth, and a fit doth not alter a state. The child in the womb stirs not always, yet it lives, and that may be gathered from the former stirrings.

This degree of sealing by way of witness and comfort, is appropriated to the holy Spirit: every person in the blessed Trinity hath their several work; the Father chooseth us, and passeth a decree upon the

whole ground-work of our salvation: the Son executeth it to the full. The Spirit applieth it, and witnesseth our interest in it by leading our souls to lay hold upon him, and by raising up our souls in the assurance of it, and by breeding and cherishing sweet communion with Father and Son, who both of them seal us likewise by the Spirit. This joy and comfort is so appropriated to the Spirit, as it carrieth the very name of the Spirit, and is one of the three witnesses on earth, that witnesseth not only Christ to be a saviour, but our Saviour. The three witnesses on earth are the *Spirit, water, and blood*: for the better conceiving of which place, we must know that the great work of Christ of redemption and justification was typified in the old testament by blood; and the great work of our sanctification typified by their washing: to answer which types, when Christ's side was pierced there came forth both blood and water, showing that Christ came not only by blood to justify us, but by water to sanctify us. Hereupon blood and water have the power to be witnesses. The blood of Christ being sprinkled on the heart by the Spirit doth pacify the conscience in assuring it that God is pacified by blood, as *being offered by the eternal Spirit*: this quieting power sheweth that it was the blood of God, and shed for me in particular.

The witness of water is from the power the Spirit hath to cleanse our nature: which no creature can do but the spirit of God; change of nature is peculiar to the Author of nature. If we feel therefore our natures altered, and of unclean become holy, in some measure we may know we are the children of God, as being begotten by the Spirit of Christ, conforming us to his own holiness: our spirit as sanctified can witness to us that we are Christ's.

But oft it falls out, that our own spirits, though sanctified, cannot stand against a subtile temptation strongly enforced, God superadds his own Spirit: guilt often prevails over the testimony of blood, that of water by reason of stirring corruptions runneth troubled. Therefore the third, the immediate testimony of the Spirit, is necessary to witness the Father's love to us, to us in particular, saying, *I am thy salvation, thy sins are pardoned.* And this testimony the word echoeth unto, and the heart is stirred up, and comforted with joy inexpressible. So that both our spirits and consciences, and the Spirit of Christ joining in one strongly, witness our condition in grace that we are the sons of God.

In this threefold testimony the order is this; blood begets water: satisfaction by blood procures the Spirit from God, as a witness of God's love; and by feeling the power of blood and water, we come to have the Spirit witnessing, and sealing our adoption unto us to establish us in the state of grace against storms of temptation to the contrary. The Spirit persuadeth to look unto blood, convinceth the heart of the efficacy of it, and then quieteth the soul, which giveth itself up to Christ wholly, and to whole Christ: and thence feels his heart established against carnal reason, so as he can and doth oppose Christ's blood to all the guilt that doth arise. And this witness of the Spirit comforting the soul is the most familiar, and affects most.

If we feel it not, as oft we do not, then rise upward from want of this joy of spirit to water, and see what work we find of the Spirit in cleansing our souls, and if we find these waters not to run so clearly as to discern our condition in them; then go to the witness of blood, and let us bathe our souls in it, and then we shall find peace in free grace procured by blood: for

ofttimes a Christian is driven to that pass, that nothing can comfort him, within or without him, in heaven or earth, but the free and infinite mercy of God, in the blood of Christ, whereon the soul relieth when it feels no comfort, nor joy of the Spirit, nor sees no work of sanctification, then it must rest on the satisfaction wrought by the blood of Christ, when the soul can go to God, and say, if we confess our sins, thou art just to forgive them, and the blood of Christ shall cleanse us from all sin. Therefore though I feel not inward peace, nor the work of the Spirit, yet I will cast myself upon thy mercy in Christ. Hereupon we shall in God's time come to have the witness of water and the Spirit more evidently made clear unto us.

The Spirit it is that witnesses with blood, and witnesses with water, and by water, whatsoever of Christ's is applied unto us, by the Spirit, but besides witnessing with these witnesses, the Spirit hath a distinct witness by way of enlarging the soul: which joy in the apprehension of God's fatherly love: and Christ's setting the soul at liberty. The Spirit doth not always witness unto us our condition by force of argument from sanctification, but sometimes immediately by way of presence; as the sight of a friend comforts without help of discourse: the very joy from sight prevents the use of discourse.

This testimony of the Spirit containeth in it the force of all, word, promise, oath, seal, &c. this is greater than the promise, as a seal is more than our hand; and as an oath is more than a man's bare word. The same that is said of God's oath in comparison with his bare promise, may be said of this sealing in comparison of other testimonies. That as God was willing more abundantly to clear to the heirs of pro-

mise their salvation, he added an oath, *Heb.* vi. 18. So for the same end he added this his Spirit as a seal to the promise, and to the other testimonies. Our own graces indeed, if we were watchful enough, would satisfy us. The fountain is open as to Hagar, but she seeth it not, &c. howsoever the Spirit, if that cometh, it subdueth all doubts.

As God in his oath and swearing joineth none to himself, but sweareth by himself; so in this witness he taketh in no other testimony to confirm it, but witnesseth by himself. And hence ariseth joy unspeakable, and glorious, and peace which passeth all understanding; for it is an extract of heaven when we see our being in the state of grace, not in the effect only, but as in the breast and bosom of God.

But how shall we know this witness from an enthusiastical fancy and illusion?

This witness of the Spirit is known from the strong conviction it bringeth with it, which weigheth and overpowers the soul to give credit unto it. But there be, you will say, strong illusions. True, bring them therefore to some rules of discerning. Bring all your joy, and peace, and confidence to the word, they go both together, as a pair of indentures, one answers another. In Christ's transfiguration upon the mount, Moses and Elias appeared together with Christ. In whatsoever transfiguration and ravishment we cannot find Moses, and Elias, and Christ to meet, that is, if what we find in us be not agreeable to the scriptures, we may well suspect it as an illusion.

That you may know the voice of the Spirit of God from the carnal confidence of our own spirits, inquire,

1. What went before.
2. What accompanieth it.

3. What followeth after this ravishing joy.

1. The word must go before it, in being assented unto by faith, and submitted unto by answerable obedience. *In whom after you believed* the word of promise, *you were sealed.* So that if there be not first a believing of the word of promise, there is no sealing, *The God of peace give you joy in believing.* There must be a believing, a *walking according to rule*, Gal. vi, or else no joy nor peace will be unto us. If we cannot bring the word and our hearts together, it is not God's, but Satan's sealing, a groundless presumption, and it will end in despair: as Christ came by water and blood, so doth this testimony, it cometh after the other two. First, the heart is carried to blood, and from thence hath quiet: then followeth water, and our nature is washed, and changed, and then cometh this of the Spirit; though it be not grounded on their testimony, but is above theirs, yet they go before. Where we thus find the work, we may know it to be right by the order of it.

It cometh after deep humiliation, and abasement: though we know ourselves to be the children of God in some such measure, as we would not change our condition for all the world; yet we would have more evidence, we would have further manifestation of God's countenance towards us, we are not satisfied, but wait: after we have long fasted, and our hearts melted, and softened, then God poureth water upon the dry wilderness, and then it comes to pass, through his goodness and mercy, that he comforts, and satisfies the desires of the hungry soul; God will not suffer the spirit of his children to fail.

3. Likewise after self-denial in that which is pleasing to us, it is made up with inward comfort: if this self-

denial be from a desire of nearer communion with God, God will not fail them in what they desire. There are wretches in the world that will deny their sinful nature nothing, if they have a disposition to pride, they will be proud; if they have a lust to be rich, to live in pleasures, to follow the vanities of the times, they will do so, they will not say nay to corrupt nature in any thing: will God vouchsafe to give any true joy or comfort of spirit to such ones? No: those that let loose their natures without a check shall never taste of this hidden manna. But when we deny ourselves, deny to hear or see that which may feed corruption: when we deny to take delight in that, that we might if we would go the course of the world, there is a proportionable measure of joy, and peace, and comfort in a higher kind made good to the soul. God is so good, we shall lose nothing for parting with any thing for his sake.

4. It is usually found after conflict and victory, as a reward. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna*, Rev. ii. God's children after strong conflict with some temptation or inward corruption, especially that which accompanieth their disposition and temper, when they have so conflicted as that at last they get the better, they find by experience sweet enlargement of spirit: to strive against them is a sign of grace; but to get victory over them, even to subdue our enemies under us that rise up against us, this bringeth true peace and joy.

5. After we have put forth our spiritual strength in holy duties, God crowns our endeavours with increase of comfort. A Christian that takes pains with his heart, and will not serve God with that which cost him nothing, enjoys that which the spiritual sluggard

wishes for, and goes without. God is so just that those men which have striven to live according to principles of nature have found a contentment proportionable to their endeavours; some degree of pleasure attends every good action, as a reward before a reward.

Besides these things that go before this joy and testimony, there are, secondly, some things that do accompany it, if it be right: as,

1. This spiritual comfort enlargeth our hearts to a desire after a high prizing the ordinances; so far is it from taking us off from a dependance upon them. In the Word and other means it found comfort from God, therefore delights to be meeting God still in his own ways. The eye of the soul is strengthened to see further into truths, and is enabled more spiritually to understand the things it knew before: as in many of the same truths that wise men understand, they understood them when they were young, as when they were old, but then more clearly. So all truths are more clearly known by this; the Spirit by which we are sealed is the Spirit of illumination, not that it reveals any thing different from the Word, but giveth a more large understanding, and inward knowledge of the same truths as were known before.

2. A liberty and boldness with God: for *where the Spirit is, there is* a gracious *liberty;* that is, further enlargements from the law, guilt of sin, and the fear of the wrath of God, that we can come with some boldness to his throne, and to him as our Father, a freedom to open our souls in prayer before him. This stands not so much in multitude of words, or forms of expressions, but a sonlike boldness in our approaches in prayer. The hypocrite especially in ex-

tremity, cannot pray, his conscience stops his mouth: but where the Spirit sealeth, it giveth this liberty, freely to open and spread our case before him, and call upon him, yea, under the evidence of some displeasure.

3. There doth likewise ordinarily accompany this sealing of the Spirit Satan's malice and opposition; who being cast from heaven himself, envies this heaven upon earth in a creature of meaner rank by creation than himself: we must not think to enjoy pure joy here without molestation. If there be danger of exalting above measure, we must look for some messenger of Satan.

After this witness it leaves the soul more humble: none more abased in themselves than those that have nearest communion with God; as we see in the angels that stand before God, and cover their faces: so *Isaiah*, vi; Job, after God had manifested himself unto him, abhorred himself in dust and ashes. It brings with it a greater desire of sanctification and heavenly-mindedness. As Elias ascended up into heaven, his cloak fell by degrees from him: the higher our spirits are raised, the more we put off affections to earthly things.

4. Again, the end of this further manifestation of the Spirit being encouragement to duty, or suffering in a good cause, the soul by this witness of the Spirit finds increase of spiritual mettle, it finds itself steeled against opposition. Whilst this wind filleth their sails, they are carried on amain, and are frighted with nothing that stands in their way. See how the believers triumph upon *the Spirits witnessing to their spirits, that they are the sons of God.* Rom. viii. 16. 33, &c.

God usually reserveth such comforts for the worst times, *Give wine to those that be of heavy hearts:* Prov. xxxi. 6. The sense of this love of Christ is better than wine. This refreshing Paul had in the dungeon, and he sung at midnight. After this witnessing therefore look for some piece of service to do, or trial to undergo.

Much must be left to God's fatherly wisdom in this, who knows whom to cheer up, and when, and in what degree, and to what purpose and service, and remember always, that these enlargements of spirit are as occasional refreshings in the way, not daily food to live upon: we maintain our life by faith, not by sight or feeling. Feasting is not for every day, except that feast of a good conscience which is continual: but I speak of grand days, and high feasts: these are disposed, as God seeth cause.

5. Where this sealing of the Spirit is, there followeth also upon it a lifting up of the head, in thinking of our latter end; it makes one think of the times to come with joy, as the Holy Ghost here mentioneth the day of redemption, as a motive to them to take heed that they did not grieve the Spirit: intimating, they should think of the day of redemption with a great deal of joy and comfort. The saints are described in Scripture to be those that *look for the appearing of Christ:* they are Christ's, and in him their reckonings and accounts are even. And therefore with delight they can often think and meditate upon the blessed times that are to come.

There be divers degrees of sealing, arising from divers degrees of revelation. God first reveals his good will in his promises to all believers; this is the privilege of the church, especially in these latter times: then by his Spirit reveals those saving truths

to those that are his by a divine light. So that by argument drawn from the power, they feel from truths in searching secrets, in casting down, in raising up, in staying the soul, they can seal to them that they are divine.

The same Spirit that reveals the power of the Word to me, reveals in particular mine own interest in all those truths upon hearing them. Whereupon they are written in my heart, as if they had been made in particular to me: the comfortable truths in the Word are transcribed into my heart answerable to the Word; as that God in Christ is mine, forgiveness mine, grace mine: whereupon adoption in Christ is sealed; which God still sealeth further to my soul by increase of comfort, as he seeth cause for encouragement. The same Spirit that manifesteth in me the word, I hear and read to be the truth of God, from the power and efficacy of it: the same Spirit teacheth to apply it, and in applying of it, sealeth me.

Therefore we ought to desire to be sealed by the Spirit, in regard of a holy impression; and then that the holy Spirit would shine upon his own graces, so as we may clearly see what is wrought in us above nature; and because this is furthered by revealing his love in Christ in adoption to us, we must desire of God to vouchsafe the spirit of revelation, to reveal the mysteries of his truth unto us; and our portion in them in particular; and so our adoption: and in the meantime to wait and attend his good pleasure in the use of all good means. Thus we waiting, God will so far reveal himself in love to us, as shall assure us of his love, and stir up love again: and the same spirit that is a spirit of revelation will be a spirit of sanctification, and so adoption. Dignity, and fitting qualities suitable to dignity, go both together.

In that grand inquiry about our condition, there is a great miscarriage, when men will begin with the first work of the Father in election, then pass to redemption by Christ: I am God's, and Christ hath redeemed me; and never think of the action of the third person in sanctification, which is the nearest action upon the soul, as the third person himself is nearest unto us. And so fetch their first rise where they should set up their last rest. Whereas we should begin our inquiry in the work of the third person, which is next unto us: and then upon good grounds we may know our redemption and election.

The holy Spirit is both a spirit of revelation and of sanctification together, as hath been said: for together with opening the love of the Father, and the Son, he fitteth us by grace for communication with them.

People out of self-love will have conceits of the Father's and Son's love severed from the work of the Spirit upon their hearts, which will prove a dangerous illusion. Although the whole work of grace by the Spirit arise from the Father's and Son's love, witnessed by the Spirit, yet the proof of the Father's love to us in particular, ariseth from some knowledge of the work of the Spirit: the error is not in thinking of the Father's and Son's love, but in a strengthening themselves by a pleasing powerless thought of it against the work of grace by the Spirit, which their corruption withstands. So they will carve out of the work of the Trinity what they think agreeable to their lusts, whereas, otherwise, if their heart were upright, they would for this very end think of God's love, and Christ's, to quicken them to duty, and to arm them against corruption.

To the Day of Redemption.

There is a double redemption: redemption of the soul by the first coming of Christ, to shed his blood for us; redemption of our bodies from corruption, by his second coming We have not the perfect consummation and accomplishment of that which Christ wrought in his first coming, till his second coming, then there shall be a total redemption of our souls and bodies, and conditions. There is a double redemption, as there is a double coming of Christ; the first, and the second; the one to redeem our souls from sin and Satan, and to give us title to heaven; the other to redeem our bodies from corruption, when *Christ shall come to be glorious in his saints.* As likewise there is a double resurrection, the first and the second, and a double regeneration of soul and body.

In sickness, and weakness of body, or when age hath overtaken us, that we cannot live long here, and the horror of the grave, the house of darkness, is presented to us. Oh let us think, there will be a redemption of our bodies, as well as of our souls! Christ will redeem our bodies from corruption, as he came to work the redemption of our souls from sin and death; and he that will redeem our bodies out of the grave, he will redeem his church out of misery, he will call the Jews; he that will do the greater, will do the inferior. When we hear of this, let us think with comfort of all the promises that are yet unperformed.

Secondly, full redemption is not yet. What need I bring Scripture to prove it? It is a point that every man's experience teacheth. Alas, let our bodies speak,

we are not free from sickness and diseases: nay, what is our life but a going to corruption? the sentence is passed upon us, *earth returneth to earth*; till death we are going to death, so besides sickness and weakness here, we must die, and after death be subject to corruption. The Apostle in this respect calleth our body, *a vile body*. As for our souls, though they be freed from the guilt and damnation of sin, yet there are remainders of corruption that breed fear and terror: and though they be freed from the rule of Satan, yet not from his molestation and vexations by temptations. In a word, our whole state and condition in this world is a state and condition of misery; we are followed with many afflictions, so that there is not yet perfect redemption, whether we look to body, soul, or state; the body being subject to diseases, the soul to infirmities, the state to misery.

But there is a *day* appointed for it.

By a *day* we are not to understand the time measured by the course of the sun in twenty-four hours, but in the Scripture's meaning a day is a set time of mercy or judgment. As there was a solemn day, *the fulness of time*, for the working of the first redemption, so there is a solemn time set for the second redemption, when all the children of God shall be gathered; those that lie in the dust shall be raised, and for ever glorified. It is the day of all days: that day that by way of excellency, is called *That day* in the Scriptures, and *the day of the Lord*. The day that we should think of every day; especially in sickness and trouble, and crosses, and molestations, from the wicked world, and in sense of the remainders of corruption. There is a day of redemption to come that will make amends for all. The frequent thoughts of that day would

comfort us, and keep us from shrinking in any affliction and trouble, it would move us to a carriage and conversation answerable to our hopes, and also it would help to fit us; it would infuse a desire of qualification to be prepared for that great day.

But how little of our time is spent in thoughts this way? If we could oft think of the day of redemption, our lives would be otherwise, both in regard of gracious, as also of comfortable carriage; should we be disconsolate at every loss and cross, at sicknesses, and the thought of death, when we shall be turned into our first principle, the earth? if we did think of the day of redemption, when all shall be restored again, all the decays of nature, and the image of God be perfectly stamped: the thought of this would make us go willingly to our graves, knowing that all this is but a preparation for the great *day of redemption.* The first day of redemption, when Christ came to redeem our souls, and to give us title to heaven; it was in the expectation of all good people before Christ; they are said *to wait for the consolation of Israel;* that was the character to know those blessed people by. And what should be the distinguishing character of gracious souls now, but to be such as wait for the coming of Christ? how oft in the epistles of Saint Paul is it—*There is a crown of righteousness for me, and for all that wait for the appearing of Christ.*

There was a year of *jubilee* among the Jews every fifty years; then all that were in bondage were set at liberty. So at this blessed *jubilee*, this glorious day of redemption, all that are in bondage of death, and under corruption, shall be set at everlasting liberty. No question but the poor servants that were vexed with hard masters, they thought of the jubilee;

and those that had their possessions took away, they thought of the jubilee, the day of recovering all. So let us oft think of this everlasting jubilee, when we shall recover all that we lost, for ever to keep it, and never to lose it again as we did in the first creation. Let us oft think of this day; it will infuse vigour and strength into all our conversation. Indeed to the ungodly, it is not a day of *redemption*, but a day of *judgment*, and *the revelation of the just wrath of God*, when their sins shall be laid open, and receive a sentence answerable.

Alas, there is such a deal of atheism in the world, (and the seeds of it in the best, unless it be wrought out daily) that we forget the God of vengeance, and the day of vengeance. Would men go on in sins against conscience, if they thought of this last day? It is impossible: such courses come from this abominable root of atheism and unbelief; for had they but a slight faith, it would be effectual to alter their course in some measure: therefore the Scripture gives them the name of fools, (though they would be thought to be the only wise men.) *The fool hath said in his heart there is no God:* and what follows? *Corrupt are they, and abominable.* The cause of all is, the fool hath said in his heart, he will needs force it upon his heart, That there is no God, hell, nor heaven, nor judgment; thence come abominable courses.

Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

FROM the consideration of all that hath been formerly spoken of, the sealing of the spirit to the day of redemption, there ariseth these four conclusions.

First, that we may attain unto a knowledge that we are in that state of grace.

Secondly, that upon knowledge of our state in grace for the present, we may be assured of our future full redemption.

Thirdly, that this assured knowledge is wrought by the Spirit.

Fourthly, that the consideration of this assurance wrought by the Spirit is an effectual argument to dissuade from grieving the Spirit.

For the first, *we may know we are in the state of grace:* first, because the apostle would not have used an argument moving, not to grieve the Spirit, from a thing unknown or guessed at; it is an ill manner of reasoning to argue from a thing unknown.

2. Again, sealing of us by the Spirit, is not in regard of God, but ourselves. God knoweth who are his, but we know not that we are his, but by sealing.

3. The scope of the Scriptures indited by the Spirit, is for comfort, the apostle saith so directly, and what comfort in an uncertain condition, wherein a man knows not but he may be a reprobate? Wherefore came our Saviour into the world, and took our nature upon him; why became he a curse for us, why hath he carried our nature into heaven, and there appears for us till he hath brought us home to himself, but that he would have us out of all doubt of his love after

once by faith we have received him? whence proceeded those commandments to believe, those checks of unbelievers, the commendation of them that did believe, those upbraidings of doubting, as springing from unbelief? to what use are the sacraments, but to seal unto us the benefits of Christ? if upon all this we should still doubt of God's love, especially when besides the sealing of the promises to us, we are sealed ourselves by the Spirit of promise.

Object. This is true if we know we do believe.

Answer. It is the office of the Spirit, as to work faith and other graces, so to reveal them to us; every grace of God is a light of itself, coming from the Father of lights: and it is the property of light, not only to discover other things, but itself too; and it is the office of the Spirit to give further light to this light by shining upon his own grace in us: an excellent place for this is the 1 *Cor.* ii. 12: *We have received the Spirit that is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God,* in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every thing be confirmed: one witness is *the spirit of man* which knows *the things that are in man;* the other witness is *the Spirit of God, witnessing to our spirits that we are the children of God.* Here is light added to light, witness added to witness, the greater witness of the Spirit to the less of our spirits, the apostle joins them both together, *My conscience bears me witness through the Holy Ghost.*

Object. Man's heart is deceitful.

Answer. But the Spirit of God in man's heart is not deceitful, it is too holy to deceive, and too wise to be deceived in this point of assurance: we plough with the Spirit's heifer, or else we could not find out this

riddle: where there is an object to be seen, and an eye to see, and light to discover the object to the eye, sight must needs follow. In a true believer, after he is enlightened, as there is grace to be seen, and an eye of faith to see, so there is a light of the Spirit discovering that grace to that inward sight: in the bottom of a clear river, a clear eyesight may see any thing; where nothing is, nothing can be seen; it is an evidence that the patrons of doubtings have little grace in them, and much boldness in making themselves a measure for others. Those that are base-born know their mothers better than their fathers; the church of *Rome*, John i, is all for the mother, but the babes of Christ know their father; the remainder of corruption will indeed be still breeding doubts, but it is the office of the Spirit of faith to quell them as they arise. We are too ready in time of temptation to doubt; we need not help the tempter, by holding it a duty to doubt; this is to light a candle before the devil, as we use to speak.

Question. May not there be doubtings where there is true faith, may not a true believer be without assurance?

Answer. There be three ranks of Christians: first, some that are yet under the spirit of bondage, that like little children, do all for fear. Secondly, those that are under the spirit of adoption, and do many things well, but yet are not altogether free from fear; these are like those children that are moved with reverence to obey their parents, and yet find their commands somewhat irksome unto them. The third are such as by the love of God shed into their hearts by the spirit of adoption, are carried with large spirits to obey their father, and herein like unto those children, that not

only obey, but take a delight in it upon a judgment, that both obedience and the thing wherein they obey is good; this we ought to labour for, but we find many Christians in the second rank, many truly believe in Christ by some light let into their hearts by the spirit of adoption, who are not yet fully assured of the love of Christ. There is the act of faith, and the fruit of faith; the act of faith is to cast ourselves upon God's mercy in Christ, the fruit of faith is in believing to be assured of this: we must know that faith is one thing, assurance another, they may have faith, and yet want a double assurance: first, assurance of their faith, being not able to judge at all times of their own act; likewise, secondly, assurance of their state in grace, as in time of desertion and temptation: a soul at such a time casts itself upon Christ, as knowing comfort is there to be had, though he be not sure of it for himself: and this the soul doth out of obedience, though not out of feeling, as the poor man in the Gospel, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief:* the soul oftentimes out of the deep cries, and in the dark trusts in God, and this is the bold adventure of faith, the first object whereof is Christ held out in a promise; and not *assurance*, which springeth from the first act when it pleaseth God to shine upon the soul, and is a reward of glorifying God's mercy in Christ, by casting the soul upon his truth and goodness. Assurance is God's seal, faith is our seal; when we set to our seal by believing, he sets to his seal, assuring us of our condition: we yield first the consent and the assent of faith, and then God puts his seal to the contract: there must be a good title before a confirmation, a planting before a rooting and establishing the bargain before the earnest. Some would have faith

to be an over-powering light of the soul, whereby undoubtedly they believe themselves to be Christ, and Christ to be theirs: which stumbleth many a weak yet true Christian, for this is rather the fruit of a strong faith, than the act of a weak, which struggleth with doubting, until it hath gotten the upper hand. True it is, there must be so much light let in to the soul as the soul may rely upon Christ, and this light must be discovered by the Spirit, and such a light as shows a special love of Christ to the soul. And again, it is true that we are not to take up our rest in the light until the heart be further subdued: as many are too hasty to conclude of a good condition upon uncertain signs, before they have attained unto fuller assurance, but yet we must not deny faith where this strong assurance is wanting, so far as to conclude against ourselves; if there be desires, putting on, to endeavour with conflict against the rising of unbelief, with a high prizing of the favour of God in Christ, so as to value it above all things. Degrees do not vary the kind, weakness may stand with truth; but where truth is, there will be an incessant desire of future sealing.

The second conclusion: *We may upon the knowledge of our present estate in grace be assured for the time to come:* for this sealing is to the day of redemption; that is, till we be put into full possession of what we now believe; and besides, sealing is for securing for the time to come, and our Saviour's promise is, that though he departed from them, yet the Comforter should abide with them for ever, *John* xiv. And why are we certain of the favour of God to our comfort for the present, but that we doubt not of it for the time to come?

Faith and love, and these graces, they never fail

finally, therefore when the Scripture speaks of faith, it speaks of salvation by it for the present: as if a man should be in heaven presently so soon as he believes. *We are saved by faith*, say the Scriptures: we are not yet saved; but the meaning is, we are set by faith into a state of salvation. Being put into Christ by faith, we *are risen with Christ, and sit in heavenly places with him*, Col. ii. Faith makes the things to come, present: and faith believes, that *neither things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ*, Rom. viii. So that our assurance is not only for the present, but for the time to come. We are sealed *to the day of redemption*, and who can reverse God's seal, or God's act and deed? Grace is the earnest-penny of glory: God hath made a covenant, and given earnest, he will not lose it, the earnest is never taken away, but filled up; if we be assured of grace for the present, we may be sure it shall be made up full in glory hereafter. If the spirit of Christ be in us, the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead, *Rom.* viii. 11, will raise us up likewise, and not leave us until we be in full redemption, *we shall awake, filled with his image*, Psalm lxxiii. 19.

No opposition shall prevail, God hath set us as a seal on his right hand to keep us, I and on his breast, as the high priest had the twelve tribes, to love us, and on his shoulder to support us. The marked and sealed ones in *Ezekiel* ix. and *Rev.* vii. were secured from all destruction. If we be in Christ our rock, temptations and oppositions are but as waves, they may dash upon *us*, but they break *themselves*.

Object. Why then do we pray for the forgiveness of sins?

Answer. We pray for a clearer evidence of what we have: secondly, as the end is ordained, so the means must be used: God doth and will pardon sin, and therefore we must pray for pardon, as a means ordained. Thirdly, prayer doth not prejudice the certainty of a thing: Christ prayeth for that he was most sure of, *I pray for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine*, John xvii.

Pregnant for the proof of this point is that of Peter, *We are begotten again to a lively hope*, a *hope* of that life which maketh *lively*. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5. Oh, but we are weak! true, but *we are kept by the power of God:* an inheritance is not only kept for us, but we are kept for it.

Object. But Satan is strong, and his malice is more than his strength?

Answer. True, but we are *kept* as by a garrison, we have a guard about us.

Object. All this is true, while faith holdeth out; but that may fail?

Answer. No, we are kept by the power of God *through faith:* God keepeth our faith, and us by faith.

Object. But the time is long between us and salvation, and many dangers may fall out?

Answer. Be it so that the time is long, yet we are kept *unto salvation*, even until the *day of redemption:* for the Spirit, by virtue of the covenant, puts the fear of God into our hearts, that we shall never depart from him: God doth not promise what we shall do of ourselves, but what he will do in us, and by us. Thus the Holy Ghost putteth a shield into our hands to ward off all objections; and helps us to subdue the reasonings that are apt to rise within us against this blessed hope. So that this happy condition is not

only sure to us, but God hath assured us of it. God's gracious indulgence is such, he sees here we go through a wilderness, and are molested every way, therefore he would have us assured of a blessed condition to come. So good is God, he doth not only find out a glorious way of redemption by the blood of his Son, God-man, but he acquaints us with it in the days of our pilgrimage. Partly, that we may glorify him, that he may have the praise beforehand of what good he intends us: for assurance of that blessed condition will stir up our spirits to bless God. What the thing itself would work, faith works the same in some measure. Therefore Saint Peter, 1 *Pet.* i. *Blessed be God*, saith he, *who hath begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance immortal, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.* Why doth he bless God before we have it? because we are as sure of it as if we had it: what is revealed beforehand, is praised for beforehand. God would have us assured, that he may have glory.

Partly to comfort us: for faith is effectual to work that comfort that the thing present would do in some measure. What comfort would the soul have, if it should see heaven open, and itself entering into it, if redemption were at hand? The same faith works in some measure. What is more sure than the thing itself? What more comfortable than faith in it?

When the Israelites were in the wilderness going to Canaan, they had many promises that they should come to Canaan, and many extraordinary helps to lead them thither; the pillar, and cloud, and angel: and God out of indulgence condescending to their weakness, gave them some grapes of Canaan: he put it into the mind of the spies to bring of the fruits.

So God gives us some work of his blessed Spirit, whereby he would have us assured, and sealed to the day of redemption.

The third conclusion is this, that *the spirit doth seal us.* This cannot be otherwise, for who can establish us in the love of God, but he that knows the mind of God towards us; and who knows the mind of God, but the spirit of God?

Then am I sealed, when I do not only believe, but by a reflecting act of the soul, know I do believe: and this reflection though it be by reason, yet it is by reason enabled by the Spirit; our spirits by the Spirit only can discern of spiritual acts: it is not for us to know things above nature, without a cause above nature. None can know the meaning of our broken desires, so as to help us in our infirmities, but that Spirit that stirred up those desires. Again, none knows the grievances of our spirits, but our own spirits, and the Spirit of God, who knows all the turnings and corners of the soul.

Who can mortify those strong corruptions, that would hinder us in the way to heaven, but the Spirit clothing our spirit with power from above? who purifieth the conscience, but he that is above conscience? Who can raise our spirits above all temptations and troubles, but that Spirit of power that is above all?

The strength and vigour of any creature is from the spirits: and the strength of the spirits of all flesh is from this Spirit, whose office is to put spirit into our spirit.

As God redeemed us with his blood, so God must apply this blood, that conscience may be quieted. He only can subdue the rebellion of our spirits, and soften our hearts, and make them fit for sealing.

The Spirit only can so report the mercy of God to our souls, as to persuade and work our hearts to this assurance, otherwise we would never yield. For partly the greatness of the state is such, that none but God can assure: and partly the misgiving and unbelief of our heart is such, that none but God can subdue it. The thing being so great, and our deservings so little, being unworthy of the things of this life, much more of that eternal happiness, this cannot be done without the high and glorious Spirit of God.

How earnest and desirous then is both the Father and the Son to save us, that pleased to send such an orator and embassador as is equal with themselves to persuade us, to assure us, to fit us for salvation? and how gracious is the Spirit that will vouchsafe to have such communion with such poor sinful spirits as ours? And should not this work upon our hearts a care not to grieve the holy Spirit? and so we come to the fourth conclusion.

The fourth conclusion is, that *the sealing of the spirit unto salvation, should be a strong prevailing argument not to grieve the Spirit*, that is, not to sin: for sin only grieves the Spirit. *The grace of God*, saith Paul to Titus, *that bringeth salvation*, Tit. ii. 11, 12, Christ appeared: and what is Christ but grace? Christ appeared, and the free favour of God in Christ, whereby we are assured of salvation: *which teacheth us*, what to do? *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* Even the consideration of the benefits of Christ, that are past; such as came with Christ's first coming: but that is not all, verse 13, *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus*

Christ. The second coming of Christ enforceth likewise the same care of holiness. *Our conversation is in heaven*, Phil. iii. 20, and not as theirs, spoken of in the former verse, whose end is damnation, whose belly is their god, who mind earthly things: no, we mind heavenly things, and these heavenly desires from whence sprung they, but from the certain *expectation of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies*, &c. that is, shall redeem us fully, even our bodies as well as our souls.

It is an argument of force, whether we be not yet sealed, or be sealed: if not sealed, then grieve not him whose only office it is to seal, entertain his motions, give way to him, that he may have scope and liberty of working.

Set no reasons against his reasons, hearken to no counsel against his counsel, stand not out his persuasions any longer, but yield up your spirits to him, lest he put a period to his patience: he is *long* suffering, but not *always* suffering: if he give us up to our own spirits, we shall only be witty to work out our own damnation: we are not given up to our own spirits, but after many repulses of this holy Spirit: and at length, what now will not serve for an argument to persuade us, shall be used hereafter as an argument to torment us. The Spirit will help our spirits to repeat and recall all the motions to our own good, that we formerly put back. We should think when conscience speaks in us, God speaks, and when the Spirit moves us, it is God that moves us, and that all excuse will be cut off: answer will be, did not I tell you of this by conscience, my deputy? did not I move you to this good by mine own Spirit? Take heed of keeping out any light; for light, where it

doth not come in and soften, hardens: none so hard-hearted as those upon whom the light hath shined: there is more to be hoped from a man that hath only a natural conscience, than from him whose heart and spirit hath been long beaten on: there is more to be hoped from a heathen Pilate, than a proud Pharisee. Those that will not be sealed to their salvation, it is just with God that they should be sealed up to their destruction; the soul without the spirit is darkness and confusion, full of self-accusing and self-tormenting thoughts: if we let the Spirit come in, it will scatter all, and settle the soul in a sweet quiet.

For those that have been sealed by the Spirit, and yet not so fully as to silence all doubts, about their estate: those should out of that beginning of comfort, which they feel, study to be pliable to the Spirit, for further increase. The Spirit sealeth by degrees: as our care of pleasing the Spirit increaseth, so our comfort increaseth; our light will increase as the morning light unto the perfect day. Yielding to the Spirit in one holy motion, will cause him to lead us to another, and so on forwards until we be more deeply acquainted with the whole counsel of God concerning our salvation: otherwise if we give way to any contrary lust, darkness will grow upon our spirits unawares, and we shall be left in an unsettled condition, as those that travel in the twilight, that cannot perfectly find out their way. We shall be on and off, not daring to yield wholly to our lusts, because of a work of grace begun: nor yield wholly to the Spirit, because we have let some unruly affection get too much strength in us; and so our spirits are without comfort, and our profession without glory.

We shall lie open to Satan, if he be let loose to

winnow our faith: for if our state come to be questioned, we have nothing to allege but the truth of our graces: and if we have not used the Spirit well, we shall not have power to allege them, nor to look upon any grace wrought in us, but upon those lusts and sins whereby we have grieved the Spirit: they will be set in order before us, and so stare us in the face, that we cannot but fix our thoughts upon them. And Satan will not lose such an advantage, but will tempt us to call the work of grace in question: which though it be a true work, yet for want of light of the Spirit to discern it we cannot see it to our comfort. Whereas if the Spirit would witness unto us the truth of our state, and the sincerity of our graces; we shall be able to hold our own, and those temptations will vanish.

For those that the holy Spirit hath set a clearer and stronger stamp upon, that do not question their condition, they of all others should not grieve the Spirit.

A spirit of ingenuity will hinder them, and stir up a shame in them to requite so ill such a friend. Nothing so ingenuous as grace: what is commendable in nature, is in greater perfection in grace. How doth the conscience of unkindness to a friend that hath deserved well of us trouble our spirits, that we know not with what face to look upon him? and will not unkindness to the Spirit make us ashamed to lift up our face to heaven?

Benefits are bonds, and the greater favour, the stronger obligation; now what greater favour is there than for the Spirit to renew us according to the image of God our glorious Saviour: who carried the image of Satan before? and by this to appropriate us unto

God, to be laid up in his treasure, as carrying his stamp, and by this to be separated from the vile condition of the world; although we carry in us the seeds of the same corruption that the worst doth, differing nothing from them but in God's free grace and the fruits of it. For God to esteem so of us, that have no worthiness of our own, but altogether persons not worthy to be beloved: as to make our unworthiness a foil, to set out the freeness of his love; in making us worthy, whom he found not so. For the Spirit by sealing of us to secure us in the midst of all spiritual dangers: and to hide us as his secret ones, that *that evil one* should not touch us to hurt us. These, as they are favours of a high nature, the more care they require to walk worthy of them. We cannot but forget ourselves, before we yield to any thing against that dignity the Spirit hath sealed us to.

Nature helped with ordinary education moveth every man to carry himself answerable to his condition—a magistrate as a magistrate, a subject as a subject, a child as a child; and we think it disgraceful to do otherwise: and shall that which is disgraceful to nature, not be much more disgraceful to nature renewed, and advanced by the Spirit? and indeed as we should not, so we cannot grieve the Spirit so far forth as we are renewed, 1 *John* iii. Our new nature will not suffer us to dissemble, to be worldly, to be carnal, as the world is, we cannot but study holiness, we cannot but be for God and his truth, we cannot but express what we are, and whose we are.

It is impossible a man should care for heaven, that doth not care for the beginnings of heaven: he cannot be said to care for full redemption and glory that doth not care for the spirit of grace; fulness of grace

is the best thing in glory; other things, as peace and joy, and the like, they are but the shinings forth of this fulness of grace in glory.

Again, when the Spirit assureth us of God's love in the greatest fruits of it, as it doth when it assureth this redemption: that love kindles love again, and love constrains us by a sweet necessity to yield cheerful and willing obedience in all things: there is nothing more active and fuller of invention than love, and there is nothing that love studies more than how to please; there is nothing that it fears more than to discontent. It is a neat affection, and will endure nothing offensive, either to itself or the spirit of such as we love: and this love the Spirit teaches the heart, and love teaches us not only our duty, but to do it in a loving and acceptable manner. It carries out the whole stream of the soul with it, and rules all, whilst it rules, and will not suffer the soul to divert to by-things, much less to contrary.

Again, these graces that are conversant about that condition which the Spirit assureth us of, as faith and hope, are purging and purifying graces, working a suitableness in the soul to the things believed, and hoped for: and the excellency of the things believed and hoped for have such a working upon the soul, that it will not suffer the soul to defile itself. Our hopes on high will lead us to ways on high, therefore, whilst these graces are exercised about these objects, the soul cannot but be in a pleasing frame.

It hath been an old cavil, that certainty of salvation breeds security and looseness of life. And what is there that an ill-disposed soul cannot suck poison out of? A man may as truly say, the sea burns, or the fire cools: there is nothing quickens a soul more

to cheerful obedience, than assurance of God's love, and that our *labour* should *not be in vain in the Lord;* this is the scripture's logic and rhetoric to enforce and persuade a holy life from knowledge of our present estate in grace. *I beseech you by the mercies of God*, Rom. xii, saith Saint Paul; what mercies? such as he had spoken of before. Justification, sanctification, assurance that all shall work together for good, that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ: all duties tend to assurance, or spring from assurance.

God's intendment is to bring us to heaven by a way of love and cheerfulness; as all his ways towards us in our salvation are in love. And this is the scope of the covenant of grace; and for this end he sends the spirit of adoption into our hearts, that we may have a child-like liberty with God in all our addresses to him. When he offers himself to us as a father, it is fit we should offer ourselves to him as children; nature teaches a child; the more he desires his father's love, the more he fears to displease him. And he is judged to be graceless, that will therefore venture to offend his father, because he knows he neither can, nor will, disinherit him. Certain it is, the more surely we know God hath begotten us to so glorious an inheritance, the more it will work upon our bowels, to take all to heart that may any way touch him: this wrought upon David, when the prophet told him, God hath done this and this for thee, and *would have done more, if that had been too little*, 2. Sam. xii, it melted him presently into an humble confession. Those that have felt the power of the spirit of adoption on their hearts will both by a divine instinct, as also by strength of reason, be carried to all those

courses wherein they shall approve themselves to their Father. Instinct of nature strengthened with grounds will move strongly.

To conclude this discourse, let Christians therefore be careful to preserve and cherish the work of assurance and sealing in them.

1. What God doth for us, he doth by grace in us, he will preserve us that we shall not fall from him by putting the grace of fear into us, *Jer.* He will keep us, but by what means? *The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard our hearts*, Phil. iii. God maketh our calling and election sure in us, 2 *Pet.* i, by stirring our hearts up to be diligently exercised in adding one grace unto another, and in growing in every grace, as 2 *Pet.* i. Therefore we must attend upon all spiritual means of growth and quickening: so shall you have a further *entrance into the kingdom of Jesus Christ:* that is, you shall have more evident knowledge of your entrance into the kingdom of grace here, and likewise into the kingdom of glory hereafter. Those that do not so, shall have no comfort either from the time past, for they shall *forget they were purged from their sins*, or from thoughts of the time to come, for they shall not be able to see things *far off*.

2. If assurance be in a lesser degree, yet yield not to temptations and carnal reasonings: if our evidences be not so fair, yet we will not part with our inheritance. Coins, as old groats, that have little of the stamp left, yet are current. We lose our comfort many times, because we yield so easily, because we have not such a strong and clear seal of salvation as we would: to be borne down that we have none at all is a great weakness: exercise therefore the little faith

thou hast in striving against such objections, and it will be a means to preserve the seal of the Spirit.

3. Because this sealing is gradual, we should pray as Paul, Ephes. i, *for a spirit of revelation*, that we may be more sealed: (the Ephesians were sealed, for whom Paul prays, and so the Colossians; yet) that God would reveal to their spirits more their excellent condition. There are *riches of assurance*, Col. ii. 2; the apostle would have them to labour not only for assurance, but for the riches of it; that will bring rich comfort, and joy and peace. Times of temptations and trial may come, and such as, if we have not strong assurance, we may be sorely troubled, and call all into question. This may be the sad condition of God's own children, and from this, that in times of peace, they contented themselves with a lesser degree of this assurance and sealing.

4. Lastly, be watchful over your own hearts and ways, that according to what you have now learned, you grieve not the Spirit, *for by it you are sealed;* intimating, that if in any thing we withstand and grieve the spirit, we shall in so doing prejudice ourselves, and suffer in the comfort and evidence of our sealing.

A

DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST

IN HIS NEARNESS TO GOD, IN HIS CALLING, IN HIS QUALIFICATION, IN HIS EXECUTION OF HIS CALLING;

A DISCOURSE UPON THE PRECEDENT WORDS TO THAT TREATISE CALLED THE BRUISED REED BY THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED DIVINE

RICHARD SIBBES

A DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST.

Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased, I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles, he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets, &c.
MATT. XII. 18.

THE words are the accomplishment of a prophecy taken out of Isaiah xlii, as we may see by the former verse, *That it might be fulfilled.* Now the occasion of bringing them in here in this verse, it is a charge that Christ gives, verse 16. That they should not discover and make him known for the miracles he did, he withdraws himself, he was desirous to be concealed, he would not live to the view overmuch: for he knew the rebellious disposition of the Jews, that were willing to change their government, and to make him king, therefore he laboured to conceal himself all kind of ways; now upon this charge that they should tell nobody, he brings in the prophet Isaiah prophesying of him, *Behold my servant*, &c. *he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.* Other kings labour that their pomp and magnificence may be seen; but he shall not mind ostentation, he shall not be contentious nor clamorous, for these three things are meant when he saith, *he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets,* he shall not yield to

any ostentation: for he came in an abased state to work our salvation, he shall not be contentious, nor yet clamorous, in matter of wrong, there shall be no boasting any kind of way, as we shall see when we come to the words, you see then the inference here.

The inference in the prophet Isaiah is to comfort the people, and to direct them how to come to worship the true God, after he had declaimed against their idolatry, as we see in the former chapter, *Behold my servant*, &c. Great princes have their embassadors, and the great God of heaven hath his Son, his servant in whom he delights, through whom, and by whom, all intercourse between God and man is.

It is usual in the prophecies, especially of Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, when he foretells any thing comfortable to the people, in the promise of temporal things, he riseth to stablish their faith in better things, by adding thereto a prophecy, and promise of Christ the Messiah, to insinuate thus much, I will send you the Messiah, that is a greater gift than this that I have promised you, therefore you may be sure of the less, as the apostle reasons excellently, *Rom.* viii. *If he spared not his own Son, but delivered him to death for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things?* So here, I have promised you deliverance out of Babylon, and this and that, do you doubt of the performance? alas, what is that in comparison of a greater favour I intend you in Christ, that shall deliver you out of another manner of Babylon, *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen*, and in *Isaiah* vii, *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son*, &c. I will send you the Messiah, God shall become man, therefore I will not stand for any outward favour or deliverance whatsoever. So he

goes to the grand promise, that they might reason from the greater to the less.

There is another end, why in other promises, there is mention of the promise of the Messiah, to uphold their faith. Alas, we are unworthy of these promises, we are laden with sin and iniquity. It is no matter, I will send you the Messiah, *Behold my servant in whom my soul delighteth*, and for his sake I will delight in you, I am well pleased with you, because I am well pleased in him, therefore be not discouraged, *All the promises are yea and amen in Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. i. 19: for all the promises that be, though they be for the things of this life, they are made for Christ, they are yea in him, and they are performed for his sake, they are amen in him; so much for the occasion of the inference in the evangelist St. Matthew, and likewise in the prophet Isaiah.

To come more directly to the words,

Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased, &c.

In the words you have a description of Christ, his nearness to God, *Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased.*

And then his calling and qualification, *I will put my Spirit upon him.*

And the execution of that calling, *He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.*

Then the quiet and peaceable manner of the execution of his calling, *He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets*, &c.

Behold!

This word is as it were a beacon lighted up to all

the rest; in all the evangelists you have this word often repeated, and the prophets likewise when they speak of Christ, there is no prophecy almost but there is this word *behold*.

Why?

Not to spend time in the variety of acceptions, but to speak of it as may serve for the present purpose. The use of it in the prophet, especially out of which these words are taken, was to present Christ to the hearts of the people of God, then, therefore, he saith, *Behold;* for Christ was present to the believers then, he did profit before he was, he did good before he was exhibited, because he was *the Lamb of God slain from the beginning of the world;* he was yesterday as well as to-day, and to-morrow as well as to-day, *yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever:* he was present to their faith, and present to them in types and sacrifices, and present in God's acceptation of him for them; therefore the prophets mount up with the wing of prophecy, and in regard of the certainty of the things to come, they speak as if they were present, as if they had looked on Christ present, *Behold my servant*, and *Behold a virgin*, &c.

But that is not all; another use of this word *behold* was to call the people's minds from their miseries, and from other abasing objects that dejected them, and might force despair; why do you dwell upon your unworthiness and sin? raise up your minds, *Behold my servant whom I have chosen*, &c. This is an object worth beholding and admiration, especially of a distressed soul that may see in Christ whatsoever may comfort it.

A third end of it is to raise the mind from any

vulgar, common, base contents; you look on these things, and are carried away with common trivial objects, as the poor disciples when they came to the temple, they stood wondering at the stones, what wondrous stones? what goodly building is here? so shallow minded men, they see any earthly excellency, they stand gazing; Alas, saith Christ, do you wonder at these things? so the prophet here raiseth up the minds of men to look on an object fit to be looked on, *Behold my servant*, &c. So that the Holy Ghost would have them from this saving object, Christ, to raise satisfaction to their souls every way; are you dejected? here is comfort; are you sinful? here is righteousness; are you led away with present contentments? here you have honours, and pleasures, and all in Christ Jesus, you have a right to common pleasures that others have, and besides them you have interest to others that are everlasting pleasures that shall never fail; so that there is nothing that is dejecting and abasing in man, but there is comfort for it in Christ Jesus, he is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady, therefore, *Behold my servant*.

This word *behold*, it is a word of wonderment, and indeed in Christ there are a world of wonders, every thing is wonderful in him. Things new are wonderful; and things rare, and things that are great, that transcend our capacity, are wonderful, that that stops our understanding that it cannot go through them, vulgar things we see through them quickly, but when we see things that stay our understandings, that raise our understandings higher, and that are more capacious than our understandings, here is matter of admiration and wonder. Now whatsoever may make wonderment is in Jesus Christ, whose name

is *Wonderful*, as it is Isaiah ix. 7, therefore the prophet saith, *Behold*

My servant.

Christ is called a *servant*, first, in respect of his creation, because being man, as a creature he was a servant, but that is not all.

He was a servant in respect of his condition; servant implies a base and low condition, *Philip.* ii, *Christ took upon him the form of a servant*, he emptied himself; he was the lowest of all servants in condition: for none was ever so abased as our glorious Saviour.

And then, it is a name of office as well as of base condition. There are ordinary servants and extraordinary, as great kings have their servants of state. Christ besides his abasement, he was a servant of state, he was an ambassador sent from the great God, a prophet, a priest, and a king, as we shall see afterwards, an extraordinary servant to do a piece of service that all the angels in heaven, and all the men on the earth joined together could not perform, this great master-piece of service was to bring God and man together again that were at variance, as it is, 1 *Pet.* iii. 18, *to bring us to God*, we were severed and scattered from God, his office was to gather us together again, to bring us all to one head again, to bring us to himself and so to God, to *reconcile us*, as the scripture phrase is. Now it being the greatest work and service that ever was, it required the greatest servant, for no creature in the world could perform it, all the angels of heaven would have sunk under this service to have undergone satisfaction to divine justice: for the angels themselves when they sinned they could not recover themselves, but sunk under

their own sin eternally; thus we see how he is God's servant, who set him apart and chose him to this service.

And then he was a servant to us, for *the Son of man came to minister, not to be ministered unto*, he washed his disciples' feet, he was a servant to us, because he did our work and suffered our punishment, *we made him serve by our sins*, as the prophet saith, he is a servant that bears another man's burthen, there was a double burthen, of obedience active, and obedience passive, he bore them both, he came under the law for us, both doing what we should have done, and indeed far more acceptably, and suffering that we should have suffered, and far more acceptably, he being our surety, being a more excellent person, he did bear our burthen, and did our work, therefore he was God's servant, and our servant; and God's servant, because he was our servant, because he came to do a work behoveful to us.

Herein appears the admirable love and care of God to us wretched creatures, here is matter of wonderment.

If we look to him that was a servant.

If we look to that in God, and him, that made him stoop to be a servant.

If we look to the manner of the performance of this service.

If we look to the fruit of that service, they are all matter of wonderment.

If we look to the person that was this servant, the apostle in Philip. ii. will tell you, *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he took upon him the shape of a servant*, was not this wonderful for God to become man, the glorious God to abase himself to be a servant? God-man, glorious God, and

base servant: for the living God to die, for the incomprehensible God to be inclosed in the womb of a virgin, for glory itself to be abased, for riches to become poor, what matter of wonderment is here? the very angels stand at a gaze and wonder, *they pry into these things*, his name may well be *wonderful*.

There are four notable conjunctions that are especially wonderful, two in us and two above us.

One in us is the conjunction of so excellent a thing as the soul breathed in by God, the soul of man is an admirable thing, the world is not worth it in the judgment of him that gave himself for it, that this should be joined to a piece of earth, indeed *I am wonderfully made*, saith David, in regard of his body, but the conjunction of the soul and body together, so excellent a substance, to so base a thing as earth, to a piece of red well coloured earth, to a lump of flesh, it is a wondrous conjunction.

But there is a more supernatural conjunction of man, when all of us, sinners as we are, are knit to Christ our head, and head and members make one Christ, here is a wondrous conjunction, St. Paul calls it a mystery, *Ephes.* v; these conjunctions in us are wonderful.

But now, to go higher, in Christ there are more wonderful conjunctions, for the greatest and the meanest to join together, for God and man to come together, the Lord of all, and a servant, and such a servant as should be under a curse, for the highest of all to come to the deepest abasement, for there was no abasement ever so deep as Christ's was, in a double regard.

First, none ever went so low as he, for he suffered the wrath of God, and bore upon him the sins of us all, none ever was so low.

And then in another respect his abasement was greatest, because he descended from the highest top of glory, and for him to be man, to be a servant, to be a curse, to suffer the wrath of God, to be the lowest of all; Lord, whether dost thou descend? here is a wonder in these conjunctions.

Next to Christ's abasement was Adam's, because he was the most excellent, being in the state of innocency, and carrying the image of God, and being familiar with God, for him presently to come into that fearful condition, it was the greatest abasement, because it was from the greatest dignity, that made the abasement of Christ so great, for lordship to submit to service, for God to be man, the blessed God to become a curse, here is matter of wonder indeed.

In Christ again there was a conjunction of perfect body, perfect soul, and perfect God, and all make one Christ; in the Trinity there is a conjunction of three persons in one nature, that is a wondrous conjunction, but it belongs not to our present purpose, here you see there is matter of wonder in the person, that Christ should be a servant.

There is matter of wonder likewise in that from whence he is a servant; whence comes it that Christ is a servant? It is from the wondrous love of God, and the wondrous love of Christ, to be so abased, it was wondrous love in God to give him to us to be so abased, and the wondrous misery we were in, that we could not otherwise be freed from; for such was the pride of man, that he being man would exalt himself to be like God, God became man, he became a servant to expiate our pride in Adam, so that it is wondrous in the spring of it. There was no such love as Christ's to become a servant, there was no

such misery as we were in out of which we were delivered by this abasement of Christ, becoming a servant, so it is wondrous in that regard, springing from the infinite love and mercy of God, which is greater in the work of redemption and reconciliation, than in the creation of the world, for the distance between nothing and something was less than the distance between sin and happiness. For nothing adds no opposition, but to be in a sinful state there is opposition, therefore it was greater love and mercy for God when we were sinful, and so obnoxious to eternal destruction, to make us of sinners not only men, but to make us happy, to make us heirs of heaven out of a sinful and cursed estate, than to make us of nothing something, to make us men in Adam, for there God prevailed over nothing, but here his mercy triumphed over that which is opposite to God, over sinfulness and cursedness. To shew that the creature cannot be so low, but there is somewhat in God above the misery of the creature, his mercy shall triumph over the basest estate where he will shew mercy, therefore there is mercy above all mercy, and love above all love, in that Christ was a servant.

Thirdly, it is wondrous in regard of the fruit we have by this service of Christ, the work of our redemption, to be translated from the *kingdom of Satan to the glorious liberty of the sons of God*, to be brought out of darkness into marvellous light, it is a marvellous matter of wonder, the good we have by this abasement of Christ, *Behold what love the Father hath shewed us that we should be called the sons of God?* Now all this comes from Christ's being a servant, our liberty comes from his service and slavery, our life from his death, our adoption and sonship, and

all comes from his abasement, therefore it is a matter of wonderment for the great things we have by it, *O the depth, O the depth*, saith St. Paul, here are all dimensions in this excellent work that Christ hath wrought by his abasement, by his incarnation, and taking upon him the form of a servant, and dying for us, here is the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of the love of God in Christ. O the riches of God's mercy, the apostles they stand in a wonder and admiration of this, and indeed if any thing be to be admired, it is Christ, that wondrous conjunction, the wondrous love that wrought it, and the wondrous fruit we have by it.

It is the baseness of our nature we can wonder at shallow things, there cannot be a foolery but there will be many about it presently, and stand admiring every empty idle thing, that the nature of man is carried away with, whereas indeed there is nothing worthy of admiration but the wonderful love of God, *O how wonderful are thy works!* saith David of the works of creation, *Psalm* viii; the work of creation and of providence whereby God guides the world are wonderful, and the psalmist cries out of the folly of men, that do not regard the work of the Lord, *Fools regard not this*, Psalm cvii. *The works of the Lord are worthy to be considered, they are known of all that delight in them*, Psalm cxi; but if these things be so wonderful, and to be regarded and delighted in, alas, what is all the work of redemption? *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, &c. there are mysteries, matters of admiration, but carnal men think these trivial matters, they can hear matters of more rarity, and when they speak of these things, alas, they are too wise to wonder, tush,

they know the gospel well enough, whereas indeed, as we see here, they are things that deserve the admiration of angels, and as they deserve it, so the angels pry into these excellent secrets in Jesus Christ.

Christ was a servant by office and by condition, we must not rest in this base condition: for he took upon him the form of a servant, that he might be an excellent servant, there is both baseness and excellency in the word servant: for his humiliation was a degree of his exaltation, and a part of his advancement; if we regard his human nature, it was an advancement for man's nature to be grafted into God by conception and incarnation; but if we regard his Godhead, for him to conceal himself, and lay aside the beams and rays of majesty, and clothe himself with man's flesh, this was the first degree of humiliation, it was an advancement to his flesh, but it was a concealing and hiding to his Godhead, for God to become a servant this was an abasement: but then consider the excellency of the service, how God delighted in it, and how useful it was to us, and we shall see that he was a servant by way of excellency. There was first in Christ human flesh, abased flesh, and then glorious flesh, abasement was first necessary for Christ: for he could not have performed the office of a servant, unless he had undertaken the condition of a servant, he must first be abased and then glorious, our ill must be his, before his good could be ours, and how could he undergo our ill, our sin and misery, and the curse due to us, but he must be abased? our sins must be imputed to him, and then his righteousness, and whatsoever is good is ours, so here is both the abasement of his condition, and the excellency of his

office to be a king, priest, and prophet to his church, as we shall see afterward.

Is the Lord Christ a servant, this should teach us not to stand upon any terms, if Christ had stood upon terms, if he had refused to take upon him the shape of a servant, alas, where had we and our salvation been? And yet wretched creatures we think ourselves too good to do God and our brethren any service. Christ stood not upon his greatness, but being equal with God he became a servant. Oh, we should dismount from the tower of our conceited excellency. The heart of man is a proud creature, a proud piece of flesh, men stand upon their distance: what, shall I stoop to him? I am thus and thus, we should descend from the heaven of our conceit, and take upon us the form of servants, and abase ourselves to do good to others, even to any, and account it an honour to do any good to others in the places we are in. Christ did not think himself too good to leave heaven, to conceal and veil his majesty under the veil of our flesh, to work our redemption, to bring us out of the cursed estate we were in; shall we think ourselves too good for any service? Who for shame can be proud when he thinks of this that God was abased, shall God be abased, and man proud? shall God become a servant, and shall we that are servants think much to serve our fellow-servants? Let us learn this lesson to abase ourselves, we cannot have a better pattern to look unto than our blessed Saviour. A Christian is the greatest freeman in the world, he is free from the wrath of God, free from hell and damnation, from the curse of the law, but then though he be free in these respects, yet in regard of love he is the greatest servant, love abaseth him to do all the

good he can, and the more the spirit of Christ is in us, the more it will abase us to any thing wherein we can be serviceable.

Then again, here is comfort for us, that Christ in whatsoever he did in our redemption is God's servant, he is appointed by God to the work, so both God and Christ meet together in the work; Christ is a voluntary in it, for he emptied himself, *he took upon him the form of a servant*, he came from heaven voluntary. And then withal the Father joins with him, the Father appointed him and sent him, the Father laid him as the corner stone, *the Father sealed him*, as it is, *John* vi. *The Father set him out*, as it is, *Rom.* iii, he hath set him out as the propitiatory. Therefore when we think of reconciliation and redemption, and salvation wrought by Christ, let us comfort ourselves in the solidity of the work, that it is a service perfectly done, it was done by Christ, God-man, it is a service accepted of God, therefore God cannot refuse the service of our salvation wrought by Christ, Christ was his servant in the working of it, we may present it to God, it is the obedience of thy servant, it is the satisfaction of thy servant, here is that will give full content and satisfaction to conscience in this that whatsoever Christ did, he was God's servant in it, but we shall better understand the intent of the Holy Ghost, when we have gone over the rest of the words, *Behold my servant*,

Whom I have chosen.

Christ was chosen before all worlds, to be the head of the elect, he was predestinate and ordained by God. As we are ordained to salvation, so Christ is ordained to be the head of all that shall be saved, he

was chosen eternally, and chosen in time, he was singled out to the work by God, and all others that are chosen are chosen in him, there had been no choosing of men but in him: for God saw us so defiled lying in our filth that he could not look upon us but in his Son, he chose him, and us in him.

Here is meant not only choosing by eternal election to happiness, but a choosing to office, there is a choosing to grace and glory, and a choosing to office. Here it is as well meant a choosing to office as to grace and glory. God as he chose Christ to grace and glory, so he chose him to the office of mediatorship. Christ did not choose himself, he was no usurper, *No man calls himself to the office*, as it is in *Hebrews*, but Christ was called and appointed of God, he was willing indeed to the work, he took it voluntary upon him, but as mediator God chose him, God the Father and he joining together.

If we respect eternal salvation or grace or office, Christ was chosen in respect of his manhood; for as it is well observed by divines, Christ is the head of all that are predestinate, and the human nature of Christ could not merit its choice, it could not merit its incarnation, it could not merit union with the Godhead, it was merely from grace. How could Christ's manhood deserve any thing of God before it was? Things must have a subsistence before they can work: our blessed Saviour is the pattern of all election, and his manhood could not merit to be knit to the second person, as how could it being a creature? Therefore the knitting of the human nature of Christ to his divine, it is called *the grace of union*, the choosing of the human nature of Christ to be so gracious and glorious, it was of grace.

Christ he was both *a chosen servant* and *a choice servant*, in calling him a chosen servant, it implies his excellency, as *a chosen vessel, a chosen arrow in God's quiver*, so a chosen servant, every way excellent.

This adds to our comfort, that whatsoever Christ did for us, he did it as chosen, he is a chosen stone, as St. Peter saith, 1 *Pet.* ii. 6, *A precious corner stone, though refused of the builders, yet precious in God's sight.*

Was Christ a chosen servant of God, and shall not we take God's choice? Is not God's choice the best, and the wisest? Hath God chosen Christ to work our salvation, and shall we choose any other? Shall we run to saints' mediation, to the Virgin Mary and others for intercession, which is a part of Christ's office? Who chose Mary, and Peter, and Paul, to this work, there is no mention in scripture of them for this purpose, *But behold my servant whom I have chosen.*

God in Paradise did choose a wife for Adam, so God hath chosen a husband for his church, he hath chosen Christ for us, therefore it is intolerable sacrilegious rebellion, and impudency to refuse a Saviour, and mediator of God's choosing, and to set up others of our own, as if we were wiser to choose for ourselves than God is, we may content ourselves well enough with God's choice, because he is the party offended.

Besides, it is folly to go out from Christ where there is all fulness and content, to leave God's chosen servant, and to go to any other servant, to any broken vessel, God rests in this servant, as Pharaoh did in Joseph, the second person in the kingdom, therefore let God's choice and ours agree.

And this directs us also in our devotions to God, how to carry ourselves in our prayers and services, to

offer Christ to God, *Behold, Lord, thy chosen servant, that thou hast chosen* to be my mediator, my Saviour, my all in all to me, he is a mediator and a Saviour of thine own choosing, thou canst not refuse thy own choice, if thou look upon me, there is nothing but matter of unworthiness, but look upon him whom thou hast chosen, my head and Saviour.

Again, if Christ be a chosen servant, O let us take heed how we neglect Christ. When God hath chosen him for us shall not we think him worthy to be embraced and regarded; shall we not kiss the Son with the kiss of love, and faith, and subjection? he is a Saviour of God's own choosing, refuse him not. What is the reason that men refuse this chosen stone? They will not be laid low enough to build upon this corner stone, this hidden stone; the excellency of Christ is hidden, it appears not to men, men will not be squared to be built upon him, stones for a building must be framed, and made even, and flat, men stick out with this and that lust, they will not be pared and cut and fitted for Christ; if they may have their lusts and wicked lives, they will admit of Christ, but we must make choice of him, as a stone to build upon him, and to be built on him, we must be made like him, we like not this laying low, and abasing, therefore we refuse this *corner stone*, though God hath made him the corner of building to all those that have the life of grace here, or shall have glory hereafter.

The papists admit him to be a stone, but not the only stone to build on, but they build upon him and saints, upon him and works, upon him and traditions, but he is the only corner stone, God hath chosen him only, and we must choose him only, that we may be framed and laid upon him to make up one building,

so much for that. *Behold my servant whom I have chosen,*

My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased.

How do we know that these words in the prophet Isaiah are fitly appliable to Christ? By the greatest authority that ever was from the beginning of the world, by the immediate voice of God the Father from heaven, who applies these words in Isaiah to Christ, *Mat.* iii. in his inauguration when he was baptized, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, this is that my Son, that beloved, ὁ ἀγαπητὸς, the beloved Son, so beloved that my soul delights in him, he is capable of my whole love, I may pour out my whole love upon him, *in whom I am well pleased*, it is the same with that here, *in whom my soul delighteth*, the one expresseth the other.

How, and in what respect, is Christ thus beloved of God?

First, as he is God, the Son of God, the engraven image of his Father, so he is *primum amabile*, the first lovely thing that ever was, when the Father loves him, he loves himself in him, so he loves him as God, as the second person, as his own image and character.

And as man he loves him, for as man he was the most excellent creature in the world, he was conceived, fashioned, and framed in his mother's womb by the Holy Ghost. It is said, *Heb.* x. 5, God gave him a body, God the Father by the Holy Ghost fashioned, and framed, and fitted him with a body, therefore God must needs love his own workmanship.

Again, there was nothing in him displeasing to God, there was no sin found in his life any way,

therefore as man he was well-pleasing to God, he took the manhood, and engrafted it into the second person, and enriched it there, therefore he must needs love the manhood of Christ, being taken into so near a union with the Godhead.

As God and man mediator especially he loves and delights in him, in regard of his office, he must needs delight in his own ordinance and decree, now he decreed and sealed him to that office, therefore he loves and delights in him as a mediator of his own appointing, and ordaining to be our king, and priest, and prophet.

Again, he loved and delighted in him, in regard of the execution of his office, both in doing and suffering. In doing, the Evangelist saith, *he did all things well*, when he healed the sick, and raised the dead, and cured all diseases; whatsoever he did was well done. And for his suffering, God delighted in him for that; as it is in John x. 17, *My Father loves me, because I lay down my life;* and so in Isaiah liii. *He shall divide him a portion with the great, because he poured out his soul unto death;* and in Philip. ii. *Because he abased himself to the death of the cross, God gave him a name above all names;* therefore God loves and delights in him for his suffering and abasement.

It is said of Noah, *Gen.* viii. 21, that he offered a sacrifice after the flood, and *the Lord smelled a sweet savour of his sacrifice*, and thereupon he saith, *I will not curse the earth again;* so God loves and delights in Christ as he offered himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour wherein God rests, he felt such a sweet savour in the sacrifice of Christ, he is so delighted in it, that he will never destroy mankind, he

will never destroy any that believe in Christ: the sacrifice of Noah was a type of Christ's sacrifice.

Now that Christ's sacrifice was so acceptable to God, there is a direct place for it in Ephes. v. *Walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smell.* And indeed how many sweet savours were there in the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross? was there not the sweet savour of obedience? he was *obedient to the death of the cross*, there was the sweet savour of patience, and of love to mankind, therefore God delighted in him, as God, as Man, as Mediator, God-man, in his doings, in his sufferings, every way.

Doth God delight thus in Christ, in his person, or considered mystically? I answer both, God loves and delights in Christ mystical, that is, in Christ and his members, in whole Christ: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, not only with whom alone by himself, but *in whom*, in him as God, in him in body and soul, in him as head of the church, in him mystically, in all that are under him any kind of way, God delights in him, and all his.

Is it possible that he should delight in the head, and refuse the members? That he should love the husband and mislike the spouse? O no; with the same love that God loves Christ, he loves all his, he delights in Christ and all his with the same delight, there is some difference in the degree, *That Christ in all things may have the pre-eminence*, but it is the same love; therefore our Saviour sets it down excellently in his own prayer, he desires, *that the same love wherewith his Father loved him may be in them that are his*, that they may feel the love wherewith

his Father loves him; for he loves him and his members, him and his spouse, with all one love.

This is our comfort and our confidence, that God accepts us, because he accepts his beloved, and when he shall cease to love Christ, he shall cease to love the members of Christ, they and Christ make one mystical Christ. This is our comfort in dejection for sin, we are so and so indeed; but Christ is the chosen servant of God, *in whom he delighteth*, and delights in us in him, it is no matter what we are in ourselves, but what we are in Christ, when we are once in him and continue in him, God loves us with that inseparable love wherewith he loves his own Son, therefore St. Paul triumphs, Rom. viii. *What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?* This love it is founded in Christ, *therefore neither things present, nor things to come*, as he goes on there gloriously, *shall be able to separate us*, you see what a wondrous confidence and comfort we have hence, if we labour to be in Christ, that then God loves and delights in us, because he loves and delights in Christ Jesus.

And here is a wondrous comfort, that God must needs love our salvation and redemption when he loves Christ, because *he poured out his soul to death to save us;* doth not God delight that we should be saved, and our sins should be forgiven, when he loves Christ because he abased himself for that purpose? What a prop and foundation of comfort is this, when the devil shall present God to us in a terrible hideous manner, as an avenging God, *and consuming fire*, &c. indeed out of Christ he is so, let us present to ourselves thoughts of God, as the Scripture sets forth God to us, and as God sets forth himself not only in

that sweet relation as a Father to Christ, but our father: *I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*, having both one God, and love and care. There is none of us all but the devil will have a saying to us, either in the time of our life, in some terrible temptation, especially when any outward abasement comes, or at the hour of death, and all the cordials we have gathered out of the Word will then be little enough to support the drooping soul, especially in the hour of temptation. Oh beloved, what a wondrous stay and satisfaction to a distressed conscience doth this yield, that Christ, in all that he hath wrought for us, is God's chosen servant, *whom he loves and delights in*, and delights in him for this very work that he abased himself and gave himself for us, that he wrought God's work, because he wrought reconciliation for us! If we can believe in Christ, we see here what ground of comfort we have, that God loves and delights in us, as he doth in his own Son.

And what a comfort is it now in our daily approach to God to minister boldness to us in all our suits, that we go to God in the name of one that he loves, *in whom his soul delights*, that we have a friend in court, a friend in heaven for us, that is at the right hand of God, and interposeth himself there for us, in all our suits that makes us acceptable, that perfumes our prayers and makes them acceptable, his intercession is still by virtue of his service, dying for us, he intercedes by virtue of his redemption; if God love him for the work of redemption, he loves him for his intercession, therefore God must needs regard the prayers made by him, by virtue of his dying for us, when he loves him for dying for us. Be sure there-

fore in all our suits to God to take along our elder brother, take our beloved brother, take Benjamin with us, offer all to God in him, our persons to be accepted in him, our prayers, our hearing, our works, and all that we do, and we shall be sure to speed; for he is one in whom the soul of God delights. There must be this passage and repassage, as God looks upon us, lovely in him and delights in us, as we are members of him, all God's love, and the fruits of it come to us as we are in Christ, and are one with him, then in our passage to God again, we must return all, and do all to God in Christ, be sure not to go to a naked God, for so he is *a consuming fire*, but go to him in the mediation of him whom he loves, *and in whom his soul delighteth.*

And shall God love him, and delight in him, and shall not our soul delight in Christ? This therefore should stir up our affections to Christ, to be faithful in our conjugal affection as the spouse of Christ, to say, *My beloved is mine, and I am my beloved's;* Christ calls his church, *My love and my dove.* Doth Christ delight in us, and God delight in Christ, and shall not we delight in Christ, that delights in us, and in whom God delights? In the 1 Cor. xvi. *ult.* the apostle is bold to pronounce a bitter curse, *anathema maranatha*, upon him that loves not the Lord Christ Jesus, a most bitter curse, when Christ shall become a servant to do our work for us, to suffer for us, to bear the burthen of our sins upon the tree, to become our husband, to bestow his riches upon us, to raise us to the same condition with himself, and withal to be such a one as God hath chosen out to love and delight in as the best object of his love, and most capable of it, and for us not to solace and delight

ourselves in him that God delights in, when God delights in him for our sake, God loves and delights in him for the work of salvation and redemption by his blood, and shall not we love and embrace him for his love, which is for our good? What good hath God by it, but only the glory of his mercy, in saving our souls through Christ? Therefore if God love him for the good he doth to us, much more should we love him for the fruit of it that we receive ourselves.

It should shame us therefore when we find dulness, and coldness upon us, that we can hear of any thing better than of Christ, and arguments concerning Christ are cold to us, alas, where is our love, and joy, and delight? and when we can make no better but a carnal use of the incarnation and other benefits by Christ, we should therefore desire God to shed the love of Christ into our hearts more and more, that we may feel in our souls the love that he bears to us, and may love God and Christ again, for that that he hath done for us.

Hence we have also a ground of estimation of Christians to be excellent persons, doth God value poor sinful souls so much as to give Christ for them to become a Saviour, doth he delight in Christ for giving himself for them, and shall not we love one another whom God and Christ so loves?

But if God love and delight in those that are in Christ, with the same love and delight that he hath in him, how shall I know that I am in Christ, and that God thus delights in me?

Briefly, a man may know that he is in Christ, if he find the Spirit of Christ in him, for the same Spirit, when Christ took our nature, that sanctified that blessed mass whereof he was made, when there was

a union between him and the second person, the same Spirit sanctifies our souls and bodies; there is one Spirit in the head and in the members, therefore if we find the Spirit of Christ in us, we are in Christ, and he in us. Now this Spirit is renewing, *Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature*, all is new, *old things are done away*, the old manner of language, the old disposition, old affections, old company, all old things are past, all is new, and if a man be a new creature, he hath right and title to *the new heaven and new earth;* let us examine the work of grace in us, if there be no change in us, we have no present interest in Christ, we have to do with him because he is still wooing us to be in him, but as yet we have no title to him.

The very beholding of Christ is a transforming sight, the Spirit that makes us new creatures, and stirs us up to behold this servant, it is a transforming beholding, if we look upon him with the eye of faith, it will make us like Christ; for the gospel is a mirror, and such a mirror, that when we look into it, and see ourselves interested in it, *we are changed from glory to glory;* a man cannot look upon the love of God and of Christ in the gospel, but it will change him to be like God and Christ; for how can we see Christ, and God in Christ, but we shall see how God hates sin, and this will transform us to hate it as God doth, who hated it so that it could not be expiated but with the blood of Christ God-man, so seeing the holiness of God in it, it will transform us to be holy, when we see the love of God in the gospel, and the love of Christ giving himself for us, this will transform us to love God, when we see the humility and obedience of Christ, when we look on Christ as God's chosen ser-

vant in all this, and as our surety and head, it transforms us to the like humility and obedience, those that find not their dispositions in some comfortable measure wrought to this blessed transformation, they have not yet those eyes that the Holy Ghost requireth here, *behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul delighteth.*

I will put my Spirit upon him.

Now we come to the qualification of Christ for his calling in these words, *I will put my Spirit upon him*, that is, I will clothe him with my Spirit, I will put it, as it were, upon him as a garment.

Now there were divers degrees of Christ's receiving the Spirit at several times: for he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost did sanctify that blessed mass whereof his body was framed in the womb of the virgin, he was quickened in the womb in his conception by the Holy Ghost, and he was graced by the Holy Ghost, and led by the Spirit in all things before his baptism, but afterward when he came to set upon his office, to be the prophet, and priest, and king of his church, that great office of saving mankind, which he did not solemnly set upon till he was thirty years old, then God poured upon him a special portion of the Spirit answerable to that great calling, then the *Spirit lighted upon him*, Christ was ordained to his office by the greatest authority that ever any was ordained from the beginning of the world: for at his baptism when he was ordained and set apart to his office, there was the Father from heaven uttered an audible voice, *This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased*, and there was Christ the party baptized and installed into that great office,

then there was the Holy Ghost in the form and shape of a dove, it being a matter of the greatest consequence that ever was in the world, greater than the creation, it was fit it should be done with the greatest authority, and so it was, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being present at the admission of Christ into his office, this is especially here intended, though the other be included, *I will put my Spirit upon him*, that is, I will anoint him, as it is in Isaiah lxi. 1, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, saith Christ, *because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to open the prison for them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*, that is, the year of *jubilee*, for that was a type of Christ, to preach the gospel, deliverance to all that are in captivity, servitude, and thraldom, under Satan and sin, this was accomplished when Christ at his baptism entered upon his office, God put his Spirit upon him, to set him apart, to ordain him, and to qualify him with abundance of grace for the work, for there are these three things especially meant by putting the Spirit upon him. separation, or setting apart, and ordaining and enriching with the gifts of the Spirit.

When any one is called to great place, there is a setting apart from others, and an ordaining to that particular, and a qualifying, if it be a calling of God, he qualifies where he ordains always.

But Christ had the Spirit before, what doth he mean then, when he saith he will put the Spirit upon him now?

I answer, he had the Spirit before answerable to that condition he was in, now he received the Spirit

answerable to that condition he was to undertake. he was perfect then for that condition, now he was to be made perfect for that office he was to set upon, he was alway perfect, he had abundance of Spirit for that estate he was in, but now he was to enter upon another condition, to preach the gospel, to be a prophet, and after to be a priest, therefore he saith now especially, *I will put my Spirit upon him.*

Now this putting of the Spirit it is expressed in *Isaiah* lxi. and other places by *anointing.* There were three sorts of persons that were anointed before Christ, prophets, priests, and kings, now Christ was to be a prophet, a priest, and a king, therefore he was to be anointed with the Spirit to enable him to these three offices.

I might here take occasion to enlarge myself in the offices of Christ, but I will only speak of them as the text ministereth just occasion.

There are three main defects in man since the fall.

There is ignorance and blindness.

There is rebellion in the will and affections.

And in regard of his condition, by reason of the sins of nature and life, a subjection to a cursed estate, to the wrath of God and eternal damnation.

Now answerable to these three grand ills, whosoever shall be ordained a Saviour must provide proportionable remedies for these; hereupon comes a threefold office in Christ that is ordained to save man, to cure this threefold mischief and malady.

As we are ignorant and blind, he is a prophet to instruct us, to convince us of the ill state we are in, and then to convince us of the good he intends us and hath wrought for us, to instruct us in all things concerning our everlasting comfort, he is such a pro-

phet, as teacheth not only the outward, but the inward man, he openeth the heart, he teacheth to do the things he teacheth; men teach what we should do, but they teach not the doing of them, he is such a prophet, as teacheth us the very things, he teacheth us to love and to obey, &c.

And answerable to the rebellion, and sinfulness of our dispositions, he is a king to subdue whatsoever is ill in us, and likewise to subdue all opposite power without us, by little and little he will trample all enemies under his feet, and under our feet too, ere long.

Now as we are cursed by reason of our sinful condition, so he is a priest to satisfy the wrath of God for us, *he was made a curse for us*, he became a servant, that being so he might die, *and undergo the cursed death of the cross*, not only death, *but a cursed death*, and so his blood might be an atonement as a priest; so answerable to the threefold ill in us, you see here is a threefold office in Christ.

Now Christ performs these three offices in this order.

First of all he is a prophet, when he was baptized the Spirit was put upon him, as in Isaiah xli. *To preach deliverance to the captives*. First he preached wherefore he came into the world, why God sent him, and discovered to the world the state they were in, and when he had preached as a prophet, then as a priest, he died, and offered himself a sacrifice.

After death his kingly office was most apparent. For then he rose again as a triumphant king over death and all our enemies, and ascended in his triumphant chariot to heaven, and there he sits gloriously as a king in his throne at the right hand of God, so that however at his baptism, and before, when he was

sanctified in his mother's womb, he was both king, priest, and prophet, yet in regard of the order of manifestation, he manifested himself first to be a prophet, secondly a priest, and thirdly to be a king; for his kingly office brake forth but seldom in the time of his abasement, sometimes it did, to shew that he was ruler, and commander of earth, and sea, and devils, and all, he wrought miracles, but the glorious manifestation of his kingly office it was after his resurrection.

Now the fundamental, the chief office to which he was anointed by the Spirit, upon which the rest depends, it was his priestly office; for wherefore was his teaching, but to instruct us what he must do and suffer for us, and what benefit we have by his sacrifice, reconciliation with God and freedom from the wrath of God, and right unto life everlasting, by his obedience to the cursed death of the cross. And how comes he to be a king to rule over us by his holy Spirit, and to have a right unto us? But because as a priest he died for us first, *He washed us with his blood, he purged us with his blood, and then he made us kings and priests*, Rev. i. All other benefits came from this, *he washed our souls in his blood first*, whatsoever we have from God is especially from the great work of Christ as a priest abasing himself, and dying for us, and thereupon he comes to be a prophet and a king, thus we see the order of Christ's offices, how they come to be fruitful to us, the rest especially by virtue of his priestly office.

Note this by the way, Christ's priestly office includes two branches, his sacrificing himself for us, a priest was to offer sacrifice, and to pray for the people, our Saviour Christ did both in the days of his humi-

liation; in his prayer in John xvii. there, as a priest, he commends his sacrifice to God before he died, and now he is in heaven making intercession for us to the end of the world, he appears for us there. We see then to what purpose God put the Spirit upon Christ, to enable him to be a prophet, a priest, and a king, and thereupon to take away those mischiefs and evils that we were subject and inthralled to, so that we have a supply for all that may any way abase us and cast us down, in the all-sufficiency that is in Christ Jesus, who was anointed with the Spirit for this end.

It may be objected, Christ was God himself, he had the Spirit and gives the Spirit, therefore how could the Spirit be put upon him?

I answer, Christ is both God and man, Christ as God gives the Spirit to his human nature, so he communicates his Spirit, the Spirit is his Spirit as well as the Father's, the Spirit proceeds from them both. Christ as man receives the Spirit, God the Father and the Son put the Spirit upon the manhood of Christ, so Christ both gives and receives the Spirit in diverse respects, as God, he gives and sends the Spirit, the spiration and breathing of the Spirit is from him as well as from the Father, but as man he received the Spirit.

And this is the reason of it, next under the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Christ the mediator was to be the spring, and original of all comfort and good, therefore Christ's nature must not only be sanctified and ordained by the Spirit, but he must receive the Spirit to enrich it: for whatsoever is wrought in the creature is by the Spirit, whatsoever Christ did as man he did by the Spirit. Christ's human nature therefore must be sanctified, and have the Spirit put

upon it. God the Father the first person in Trinity, and God the Son the second, they work not immediately, but by the Holy Ghost, the third person, therefore whatsoever is wrought upon the creature, it comes from the Holy Ghost immediately, so Christ received the Holy Ghost as sent from the Father and the Son. Now as the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, so he works from the Father and the Son, he sanctifieth and purifieth, and doth all from the Father and the Son, and knits us to the Father and the Son; to the Son first, and then to the Father, therefore it is said, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost;* because all the communion we have with God is by the Holy Ghost, all the communion that Christ as man had with God was by the Holy Ghost, and all the communion that God hath with us and we with God is by the Holy Ghost: for the Spirit is the bond of union between Christ and us, and between God and us, God communicates himself to us by his Spirit, and we communicate with God by his Spirit. God doth all in us by his Spirit, and we do all back again to God by the Spirit; because Christ as a head, as the second Adam was to be the root of all that are saved, as the first Adam was the root of all that are damned, he was therefore to receive the Spirit and to have it put upon him in a more excellent and rich manner, for we must know that all things are first in Christ, and then in us.

God chose him first, and then he chose us.

God singled him out to be the Saviour, the second Adam, and he calls us in Christ.

God justified Christ from our sins, being our surety, taking our sins upon him, we are justified, because he

by his resurrection quit himself from the guilt of our sins, as having paid the debt.

Christ is *the first fruits of them that rise again*, we rise again, because he is risen.

Christ first ascended, we ascend in Christ.

Christ is first loved, we are loved in the beloved.

Christ is first blessed, *we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ*. So whatsoever is in us, we have it at the second hand, we have the Spirit in us, but he is first in Christ, God hath put the Spirit in Christ, as the spring, as the second Adam, as a public person, that should receive the Spirit for us all; *he is first in all things, Christ must have the pre-eminence*, he hath the pre-eminence in all, both before time, in time, and after time, in election, in whatsoever is done here in this world, and in glorification, all is first in Christ, and then in us, he is the elder brother.

We must understand this, to give Christ his due honour and respect, and to know whence we have all we have. Therefore the Spirit is said here first, *to be put upon Christ*. We have not the Holy Ghost immediately from God, but we have him as sanctifying Christ first, and then us, and whatsoever the Holy Ghost doth in us, he doth the same in Christ first, and he doth it in us because in Christ. Therefore in John xiv. Christ saith, *He shall take of mine*, whatsoever the Holy Ghost works in us, he takes of Christ first.

How is that?

Thus: the Holy Ghost comforts us with reasons from Christ, he died and hath reconciled us to God, therefore now God is at peace with thee. Here the Holy Ghost takes a ground of comfort from the death

of Christ. When the Holy Ghost would raise a man up to holiness of life, he tells him, Christ thy Saviour and head is quickened, and is now in heaven, *therefore we ought to rise to holiness of life*. If the Holy Ghost be to work either comfort or grace, or any thing, he not only doth the same thing that he did first in Christ, but he doth it in us by reasons from Christ, by grounds fetched from Christ, the Holy Ghost tells our souls that God loves Christ first, and he loves us in Christ, and that we are those that God gave Christ for, that we are those that Christ makes intercession for in heaven, the Holy Ghost witnesseth to us the love of the Father, and the Son, and so he fetcheth from Christ whatsoever he works.

And hence the work of the Holy Ghost is distinguished from illusions and delusions, that are nothing but frantic conceits of comfort that are groundless. The Holy Ghost fetcheth all from Christ in his working and comfort, and he makes Christ the pattern of all, for whatsoever is in Christ, the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of Christ, works in us, as it is in Christ. Therefore in John i. 13. it is said, of *his fulness we receive grace for grace*, that is, grace answerable to his grace. There are three things that we receive answerable to Christ by the Spirit.

We receive grace, that is, the favour of God answerable to the favour God shews his Son, he loves his Son, he is graciously disposed to him, and he loves us.

So grace habitual, we have grace in us answerable to the grace in Christ, we have love answerable to his love, patience answerable to his patience, obedience and humility answerable to that in Christ, the Spirit works a conformity to Christ in all things.

Likewise, in the third place, the Spirit assures us of the same privileges that issue from grace: Christ is a Son, the Spirit tells us we are sons, Christ is an heir, the Spirit tells us we are heirs with Christ; Christ is the king of heaven and earth, the Spirit tells us that we are kings, that his riches are ours, *thus we have grace for grace*, both favour and grace in us, and privileges issuing from grace, we have all as they are in Christ. Even as in the first Adam we receive of his emptiness, curse for curse, ill for ill, for his blindness and rebellion we are answerable, we are born as he was after his fall, so in the second Adam by his Spirit, we receive *grace for grace*.

Hence issues this, that our state now in Christ is far more excellent than our state in Adam was.

How doth it spring hence?

Thus: Christ is God-man, his nature was sanctified by the Spirit, he was a more excellent person, he gives and sends the Spirit, Adam was only a mere man, and therefore his goodness could not be so derived to his posterity: for however the Holy Ghost was in Adam, yet the Holy Ghost did not so fill him, he was not so in him as in Christ, the Holy Ghost is in Christ in a more excellent manner, for Christ being equal with God he gave the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost comes from Christ as God, now the second Adam being a more excellent person, we being in Christ the second Adam, we are in a more excellent, and in a more safe estate, we have a better keeper of our happiness than Adam, he being a mere man, he could not keep his own happiness, but lost himself and all his posterity, though he were created after the image of God, yet being but a mere man, he shewed himself to be a man, that is, a changeable creature; but Christ being

God and man, having his nature sanctified by the Spirit, now our happiness is in a better keeping, for our grace hath a better spring, the grace and sanctification we have it is not in our own keeping, it distils into us answerable to our necessities, but the spring is indeficient, it never fails, the spring is in Christ. So the favour that God bears us it is not first in us, but it is first in Christ; God loves him, and then he loves us, he gives him the Spirit, and us in him. Now Christ is the keeper both of the love of God towards us and the grace of God, and whatsoever is good, he keeps all for us, he receives all for himself and for us, he receives not only the Spirit for himself, but he receives it as mediator, as head, *for we all of his fulness receive grace for grace*, he receives it as a fountain to diffuse it, I say, this shews us our happy and blessed condition in Jesus Christ, that now the grace and love of God and our happiness, and the grace whereby we are sanctified and fitted for it, it is not in our own keeping originally, but in our head Christ Jesus.

These be comfortable considerations, and indeed the life and soul of a Christian's life and comfort, if we conceive them aright, they will quicken us to obedience, and we shall know what the gospel is. To come to make some use of it.

I might observe this, that none should take that office upon them to which they are not called of God, nor qualified by his Spirit, especially ministers, because Christ did not set upon his office, till the Spirit was put upon him, the Spirit must enable us, and fit us for every thing, but I leave that, and come to that which concerns us all.

First then hath God put the Spirit upon Christ, as

the evangelist saith in John iii. 34, *He whom God hath sent*, that is Christ, *he speaketh the word of God: for God gives him not the Spirit by measure*, God doth not stand measuring grace out to Christ, but he pours it out upon him full measure, running over, because he receives it not for himself alone but for us, we receive the Spirit by measure, Eph. iv. 7, *According to the measure of the gift of Christ*, Christ gives us all a measure of sanctifying knowledge and of every grace, *till we grow to be a perfect man in Christ*. Therefore it is called the *first fruits of the Spirit, as much as shall fit us for heaven, and grace sufficient, though it be not that measure we shall have hereafter, or that we would have here*. Christ had a full measure, the fulness of a fountain, diffusive, not only abundance for himself, but redundance, and overflowing for the good of others, he being the head of the church, not only a head of eminence, but of influence to bestow, and convey all grace in him to all his members, proportionable to the service of every member, therefore he received not the Spirit according to measure, that is, sparingly, but it was showered upon him, he was filled and clothed with the Holy Ghost. Is it so?

Let us labour then to see where to have supply in all our wants, we have a full treasury to go to, all treasure is hid in Christ for us, what a comfort is this in anything we want? If we want the favour of God, go to his beloved Christ, desire God to love us *in his beloved*, and to accept us in his gracious Son, in him whom he hath made his servant, and anointed with his Spirit for that purpose.

If we want particular graces, go to the well head, Christ, consider of Christ now filled for us as it was

in Aaron, the oil that was poured on *Aaron's head ran down to his beard, and to the skirts of his clothing*, the meanest parts of his garment were bedewed with that oil; so the graces of God's Spirit poured upon our head, Christ, our Aaron, our high priest, run down upon us, upon all ranks of Christians, even upon the skirts, the weakest and the lowest Christians, every one hath *grace for grace*, we all partake of the oil, and anointing of our spiritual Aaron, our high priest. If we want any thing, therefore, let us go to him, *I can do all*, saith St. Paul, *in Christ that strengtheneth me*, go to him for patience, for comfort, for every thing, because God hath put his Spirit upon him, to supply all our wants, he hath *the oil of gladness above his fellows*, but for his fellows, *Psalm* xlv. he hath the oil of grace more than any, but it is not only for him but for us all. Therefore let us have comfortable meditations of the fulness of Christ, and make use of it, all this is for me; in *Col.* ii. St. Paul sets it out, *in him the fulness of the Godhead dwells personally*, for that is meant by σωματικῶς, and it follows after, *in him we are complete*. Wherefore is all the fulness that is in him? to shew that in him *we are complete*, so in 1 *John* v. 20, to shew how the spirits of the apostles agree, in this saith he, *we know that the Son of God is come in the flesh, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is true God and eternal life*, Christ is true God and eternal life for us all, for our comfort, *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding*, &c. *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.* How doth this depend upon the other? Thus, will you go to idols, stocks, and

stones, devices of men's brain, for supply of grace and comfort? Christ whom God hath sent, he is come into the world, *He is God and eternal life; God hath given eternal life, and this life is in his Son*, therefore why should you go to idols.

What is the ground of popish idolatries and abominations, they conceive not aright of the fulness of Christ, wherefore he was ordained, and sent of God; for if they did, they would not go to idols and saints, and leave Christ. Therefore let us make this use of it, go out of Christ for nothing: if we want favour, go not to saints; if we want instruction, go not to traditions of men, he is a prophet wise enough, and a priest full enough to make us accepted of God; if we want any grace, he is a king able enough, rich enough, and strong enough to subdue all our rebellions in us, and he will in time by his Spirit overcome all, *stronger is he that is in us than he that is in the world*. The Spirit in the world, the devil and devilish minded men they are not so strong as the Spirit of Christ: for by little and little the Spirit of Christ will subdue all. Christ is a king, go not out of him therefore for any thing. *Babes, keep yourselves from idols*, you may well enough, you know whom to go to.

Therefore let us shame ourselves, is there such a storehouse of comfort and grace every way in Christ? Why are we so weak and comfortless? Why are we so dejected as if we had not such a rich husband? All our husband's riches are ours for our good, we receive of it in our measure, why do we not go to the fountain, and make use of it? Why in the midst of abundance are we poor and beggarly? Here we may see the misery of the world, Christ is a prophet to

teach us the way to heaven, but how few be there that will be directed by him? Christ is a king to subdue all our spiritual and worst enemies, to subdue those enemies that kings tremble at, to subdue death, to subdue the fear of judgment, and the wrath of God, and yet how few will come under his government? *Christ is the light of the world*, yet how few follow him? Christ is the way, yet how few tread in his steps? Christ is our wisdom and our riches, yet how few go to him to fetch any riches, but content themselves with the transitory things of this life? Men live as if Christ were nothing, or did nothing concern them, as if he were a person abstracted from them, as if he were not a head or husband, as if he had received the Spirit only for himself and not for them, whereas all that is in Christ is for us, I beseech you therefore let us learn to know Christ better, and to make use of him.

Again, if Christ hath *the Spirit put upon him for us all*, then in our daily slips and errors make this use, to offer Christ to God with this argument, take an argument from God himself to bind him, God will be bound with his own arguments, we cannot bind him with ours, but let us go to him and say, *Lord, though I be thus and thus sinful, yet for Christ Jesus' sake thy servant, whom thou lovest and hast put thy Spirit upon him to be a priest, and to make intercession for me, for his sake pardon, for his sake accept.* Make use of God's consecration of Christ by the Spirit to God himself, and bind him with his own mediator, and with his own priest of his own ordaining; thou canst not, Lord, refuse a Saviour and Mediator of thine own, sanctified by thine own Spirit, whom thou hast set apart, and ordained and

qualified every way for this purpose; let us go to God in the name of this mediator Jesus Christ every day, and this is to make a good use of this, *that God hath put his Spirit upon him.*

But to make a use of trial, how shall we know that this comfort belongs to us, that Christ hath the Spirit put upon him for us or no; whether he be ordained a king, priest, and prophet for us? That which I said before will give light to this, we must partake of the same Spirit that Christ hath, or else we are none of his members, as we partake of his name, so we must also of his anointing, thereupon we are called Christians, because we partake of the anointing and Spirit of Christ, and if we have the Spirit of Christ, it will work the same in us as it did in Christ, it will convince us of our own ill, of our rebellions, and cursed estate, and it will convince us likewise of the good we have in him. And then, *he is a Spirit of union*, to knit us to Christ, and make us one with him, and thereupon to quicken us, to lead us, and guide us, and to dwell in us continually, to stir up prayers and supplications in us, to make us cry familiarly to God as to a father, to comfort and support us in all our wants and miseries, as he did Christ, *to help our infirmities*, as the apostle at large in *Rom.* viii. sets down the excellent office of the Holy Ghost, what he doth in those that are Christ's. Let us therefore examine ourselves, what the Spirit doth in us, if Christ be set apart to redeem us, as a priest. Surely all his offices go together, he doth by the same Spirit rule us, Rev. i. *He hath washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests.* Whomsoever he washeth in his blood he maketh him a king, and a priest, he makes him by the power of his Spirit able to rule

over his base corruptions; we may know then, whether we have benefit by Christ by his Spirit, not only by the Spirit witnessing that we are the sons of God, but by some arguments whereby the Spirit may witness without delusion, for though the Spirit of Christ tells us that we are Christ's, yet the proof must be from guiding and leading, and comforting, and conforming us to Jesus Christ, in making us kings and prophets, enlightening our understandings to know his will, and conforming us to be like him. The Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of power and strength, it will enable us to perform duties above nature, to overcome ourselves and injuries, it will make us to want and to abound, it will make us able to live and do die, as it enabled Christ to do things that another man could not do. So a Christian can do that, and suffer that that another man cannot do and suffer, because he hath the Spirit of Christ.

At the least whosoever hath the Spirit of Christ, he shall find that Spirit in him striving against that which is contrary, and by little and little getting ground: where there is no conflict, there is no Spirit of Christ at all; I will not be large in the point, only I speak this by way of trial to know whether we have the Spirit of Christ in us or no, if not we have nothing to do with Christ: for Christ saves us not as he is out of us only, Christ was to do something of himself that we have no share in, only the good of it is ours, he was to redeem us by his blood, to be a sacrifice, the title to heaven and salvation was wrought by Christ out of us, but there is somewhat that he doth not only for us, but he works in us by his Spirit, that is, the fitting of us for that he hath given us title to, and the applying of that that he hath done for

us. Whosoever therefore hath any benefit by Christ, he hath the Spirit to apply that to himself and to fit and qualify him to be a member of such a head, and an heir of such a kingdom; whosoever Christ works anything for, he doth also work in them, there is a Spirit of application, and that spirit of application, if it be true, it is a spirit of sanctification and renovation fitting us every way for our condition.

Let us not abuse ourselves, as the world commonly doth, concerning Christ, they think God is merciful and Christ is a Saviour. It is true; but what hath he wrought in thee by his Spirit, hast thou the Spirit of Christ? or *else thou art none of his*, Romans viii. Wherever Christ is he goes with his Spirit, to teach us to apply what Christ hath done for us, and to fit us to be like him. Therefore let those that live in any sins against conscience, think it a diabolical illusion to think God and Christ is merciful; but where is the work of the Spirit? All the hope thou hast is only that thou art not in hell as yet for the time to come, but for the present I dare not say thou hast any thing to do with Christ, when there is nothing of the Spirit in thee, the Spirit of Christ conforms the spouse to be like the husband, and the members to be like the head, therefore beg of Christ that he would anoint himself king in our hearts, and prophet, and priest in our hearts, to do that that he did, to know his will as a prophet, to rule in us as a king, and to stir up prayers in us as a priest, to do in some proportion that that he doth, though it be in never so little a measure, for we receive it in measure, but Christ beyond measure, we must labour for so much as may manifest to us the truth of our estate in Christ, that we are not dead but living branches.

Now Christ gives and conveys his Spirit especially, and most of all since his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God, for after his resurrection he declared his victory over all his enemies, and therefore was able to give the Spirit without opposition, and upon his resurrection, death and hell, and the anger of God were overcome, and our sins were satisfied for, now Christ was head indeed, having trod all his enemies under his feet, now he was enabled to give the Spirit; but upon his ascension into heaven, and his sitting there, he was more enabled, for even as the sun, being so high above the earth, doth convey his light and heat and influence upon the inferior bodies, so Christ being so highly advanced is fitter to infuse his Spirit and grace here below since his exaltation, therefore the church is fuller of grace, and grace hath been more spread and diffused since the ascension of Christ than before; and the evangelist gives it as a reason, *The Spirit was not yet given, because Christ was not ascended,* intimating that after his ascension, there was a more full portion of the Spirit given, God being fully appeased by the death of Christ, and Christ staying the advantage that was fittest to give the Spirit, now God the Father gives the Spirit with the Son, so in both regards there was a greater fulness of the Spirit. Therefore the prophets, speaking of the times of Christ, especially of his exaltation, shew that then they should be filled with the Spirit, that the Spirit should be poured out upon all flesh more abundantly than before. And that is the reason that the apostles so differed from themselves, before and after Christ's ascension, what a wondrous alteration was there! Peter before, he flies even at the voice of a maid, and they were full of contention, and vainglory; but

after, we see when the Spirit, the Holy Ghost came down after Christ's ascension into heaven, how courageous, and valorous they were that they accounted it a matter of glory to suffer anything, and indeed we have more or less valour and courage, the more or less Spirit we have, now they having received more abundance of Spirit, hereupon they were more courageous and undaunted at one time than another, and this abundance of the Spirit comes especially since Christ's advancement.

But how or by what means doth Christ give his Spirit to us? This Spirit that is so necessary for us it is given by the ministry of the gospel, which is the ministry of the Spirit, *received ye the Holy Ghost by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith preached?* Gal. iii. 2; when the love of God in Christ, and the benefits by Christ are laid open in the preaching of the gospel to us, God gives his holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. Now God in Christ would save us by a triumphant and abundant love and mercy, and the Spirit of God never goes but where there is a magnifying of the love and mercy of God in Christ, therefore the ministry of the gospel, which only discovers the amity and love of God to mankind being now reconciled in Christ, it is accompanied with the Spirit, to assure us of our part and portion in those benefits: for the Spirit is the fruit of God's love as well as Christ; Christ is the first gift, and the Spirit is the second, therefore that part of the word that discovers God's exceeding love to mankind, leaving angels, when they were fallen, in their cursed estate; and yet giving his Son to become man, and *a curse for us*, the discovery of this love and mercy of God, and of his Son Christ to us, is joined with the Spirit:

for by the Spirit we see our cursed estate without the love and mercy of God in Christ, and likewise we are convinced of the love of God in Christ, and thereupon we love God again, and trust to his mercy, and out of love to him perform all cheerful obedience, whatsoever we do else, if it be not stirred by the Spirit, apprehending the love of God in Christ, it is but morality. A man shall never go to heaven but by such a disposition and frame and temper of soul as is wrought by the Holy Ghost, persuading the soul first of the love and favour of God in Christ. What are all our performances if they be not out of love to God? and how shall we love God except we be persuaded that he loves us first? therefore the gospel breeds love in us to God, and hath the Spirit together with it, working a blessed frame of sanctification, whereby we are disposed to every good duty. Therefore, if we would have the Spirit of God, let us attend upon the sweet promises of salvation, upon the doctrine of Christ: for together with the knowledge of these things the Holy Ghost slides, and insinuates, and infuseth himself into our souls.

Therefore the ministers of the gospel should be much in laying open the riches of God in Christ; in unfolding Christ all other things will follow, as St. Paul in 2 *Tit.* xii. *The grace of God hath shined, hath appeared gloriously, teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live holily and soberly in this present world;* where the grace and love of God is persuaded and shed into the soul all will follow.

What is the reason that former times were called dark times, and so they were, the times of popery, a dark age? Christ was veiled, the gospel was veiled,

there was no preaching of salvation by Christ alone, people were sent to stocks and stones, and to saints, and instead of the word, they were sent to legends and such things, Christ was obscured, thereupon they were dark ages; those ages wherein the Spirit of God is most, is where Christ is most preached, and people are best alway where there is most Spirit, and they are most joyful, and comfortable, and holy, where Christ is truly laid open to the hearts of people; the preaching of mere morality, if men be not careful to open Christ, to know how salvation is wrought by Christ, and how all good comes by Christ, it will never make a man perfectly good, and fit him for heaven, it may make a man reform many abuses, like a philosopher, which hath its reward, and respect amongst men, but nothing to give comfort at the hour of death, and the day of judgment, only that whereby the Spirit is conveyed is the knowledge and preaching of Christ in his state and offices.

Again the Spirit of Christ is given, in obedience to this gospel, Acts v. 32, *He gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey him.* Now there is *the obedience of faith, and the obedience of life*, when the soul is wrought to obedience, to believe, and to be directed by God, then the holy Spirit is given in a further measure still, the Holy Ghost is given to them that obey, to them that do not resist the Spirit of God: for in the ministry of the gospel the Spirit is given in some degree to reprobates, it is offered, it knocks at the hearts of the vilest persons, that live in filthy and false courses of life, whose tongues, and bodies, are all instruments of an unsanctified soul to offend God, they have gracious motions offered them, but then they do not obey them, therefore the Spirit seizeth

not upon them to rule in them, they have the Spirit knocking upon them, he doth not dwell in them, and take up his lodging in them. The Spirit is given to them that obey the sweet motions of it. Now, who is it that hears the blessed word of God, the blessed tidings of salvation, but he hath sweet motions of the Spirit to be in love with God and the mercy of God, and to hate sin a little for a time, then presently upon it corruption joins and swells against those motions, and they only rest in the bare motion, and never come to any perfection. This is the state of reprobates in the church, they have many motions by the Holy Ghost, but their hearts are not subdued to obedience, not to constant obedience. Therefore if we would have the Spirit of Christ, let us labour to subject ourselves unto it, when we have any good motion by the ministry of the Word, or by conference, or by reading of good things, as holy things have a savour in them, the Spirit breathes in holy exercises, oh, give way to the motions of God's spirit, we shall not have them again perhaps, turn not back those blessed messengers, let us entertain them, let the Spirit dwell and rule in us, it is the most blessed lodger that ever we entertained in all our lives; if we let the Spirit guide and rule us, it will lead us and govern and support us in life and death, and never leave us till it have raised our bodies, the Spirit of Christ in us at length will quicken our dead bodies, *Rom.* viii, it will never leave us till it have brought us to heaven. This is the state of those that belong to God, that give way to the motions of God's Spirit to rule and guide them; therefore if we would have the Spirit of Christ, let us take heed of rebelling against it.

This is the state of many of us, the Lord be mer-

ciful to us, and cure us, that we do not only not receive the motions of the Spirit deeply into us, but if they be such as cross us in our pleasures and profits, though the Word and Spirit join together, there is a rising of the proud spirit of man against so much of the Spirit and the motions of it, and against such parts of the Word as crosseth us, this will be laid heavy to our charge one day, that we would bring the Spirit of God to our corruptions, and not bring our hearts to God's spirit, and hereupon be those phrases in the scripture of *tempting* the Spirit, Ananias and Saphira *tempted the Spirit*, that is, when men will do that which is naught, and try whether God will forgive them, and put it off or no, how many are there that tempt the Spirit? that put it off, perhaps I shall have the like motions another time, I shall have better occasion when I can gain no more, when I can have my pleasures no more, *thus men resist the Spirit*, as St. Stephen saith, that is, when the Spirit discovers to them what they should believe, and what they should do, and they see it crosseth their resolution to be naught, hereupon they resist the work of the Spirit, that else would close with their souls and sanctify them, and fit them for heaven, if they would give way to it. And there is a quenching of the Spirit, that is, when men have sweet motions of the Spirit, and presently by some ill language or course of life they defile their vessels and quench the sweet motions of the Spirit. Let us take heed of all these, of *tempting*, of *resisting*, and *quenching the Spirit*: for undoubtedly, living in the bosom of the church, we have many heavenly motions, especially those that have so much goodness in them as to attend upon God's ordinances, they have those motions, at those times, that they never have

after perhaps, but they either resist them, or quench them, and wrong and grieve the Spirit, as St. Paul saith, *Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption*, Ephes. v. Men speak or do somewhat that grieves the Spirit of God in them, their conscience, being enlightened by the Spirit, tells them that they have done that which is naught, yet notwithstanding for this or that advantage, to please this or that company, they will speak or do that which is ill, and then the Spirit that was given in some measure before is grieved at this carnal and sinful liberty. Therefore if ye would be guided by the Spirit of Christ, take heed of all these and of such like courses.

Another means whereby we may come to obtain the Spirit is *prayer;* to be guided by the Spirit of Christ, next to Christ himself our Saviour, is the most excellent thing in the world, therefore it is worth the begging and getting, *Luke* xi. 13, *How much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Insinuating, that we can ask nothing greater than the Spirit. A man that hath a sanctified judgment next the forgiveness of his sins through Christ, he begs nothing more than the Spirit to witness the favour of God in Christ, and to fit him for other favours, especially to fit us for the world to come. God can give nothing greater, nor we can beg nothing greater, if we have sanctified judgments, than the Spirit of God, therefore let us have a high esteem of the holy Spirit, of the motions of it, and out of a high esteem in our hearts beg of God the guidance of the Spirit, that he would lead us by his Spirit, and subdue our corruptions, that we may not be lead by our own lusts, and so consequently by Satan that

leads us by our own lusts in the way that leads to perdition. So much for that: *I will put my Spirit*, &c.

And he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

After Christ was fully furnished, as he was furnished with the Spirit of God, and with a commission from heaven, from *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, having this high commission, and gifts for it by the Spirit, he falls upon his office presently, we are never fit for anything till we have the Spirit, and when we have the Spirit it is active, and vigorous, and working, *He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.*

What is meant by judgment here?

By judgment is meant laws, he shall declare his laws, his truth, and together with declaring the truth of the gospel, which is his evangelical law, he shall declare it in the soul, and bow the neck of the inward man, to the obedience of this his judgment. Christ then by himself and his apostles and ministers, shall declare his truth, which is the sceptre of his government, to the Gentiles, and not only declare it, as princes do their laws by proclamations and statutes, &c. but he shall declare it to the heart by his Spirit.

Now, in the Hebrew language, ordinarily, wise government is called *judgment; he shall declare judgment*, that is, his manner of government, he shall declare it by his Spirit, and cause our spirits to submit to it.

And indeed grace is called judgment, in the phrase of scripture, the grace of sanctification, because it is agreeable to judgment, to God's law, it is agreeable to it, and wrought by it in the soul, and it is the best judgment, for grace whereby the soul is subject to the judgment and law, and rule of God, it must needs be

the best judgment, because it is agreeeable to God's judgment, grace judgeth aright of things, and subdues all things, the affections and inward man to itself.

But why is the word of God called judgment?

It is called so frequently in the Psalms, and in other places of scripture, because the truth of God shews what God doth judge. Judgment is originally in God, who is the first truth, and the first good, the first truth judgeth best of truths, what is light, and what is darkness, what is truth, and what is error, what is good, and what is ill, what is safe, and what is dangerous; all will grant that God is the first light, and the first truth, therefore he doth originally judge of the difference of things, for even as in the creation he put an eternal difference between light and darkness, and severed things that were in the confused *chaos*, and established an orderly world, that heaven should be above, and earth below, that one thing should be above another, and all in judgment. So in the governing of mankind, he shews his judgment by his word, and that word shews how God judgeth of things. Laws shew judgment what is to be done, and what is not to be done. The gospel shews God's judgment, what he will have us believe and hope for, and how we must carry ourselves in way of thankfulnesses if we do this, then the gospel, the word of God, judgeth what shall become of us, *we shall be saved*, if we do the contrary, the word again judgeth what our state shall be, *we shall be damned*, so it is called judgment, because it judgeth what is good and what is ill, and because it determineth what shall become of us if we obey or disobey.

Hereupon it is that the word of God is a glass

wherein we may see our own condition infallibly, what will become of us, the word of God judgeth thus, he that lives in such and such sins shall come to this end, God will inflict these and these judgments upon him. *Judgment* in the first place is, you shall do this and this, because it is good. *Judgment* in the second place is, because you have not done this, this shall befall you; so the *evangelical* judgment of the gospel is this, *he that repents and believes shall not perish, but have everlasting life:* but he that arms and furnisheth his heart to rebellion, he shall perish in his sins, *he that believeth not is condemned already, the wrath of God hangs over his head.* So from this, that God's truth is called judgment, we may know how to judge of ourselves, even as God judgeth in his Word, we may see our own faces and conditions there, he that is a man of death may see it in the Word, and he that is appointed for happiness may there see his condition.

Again, not only the Word of God, the gospel, which is out of us in the book of God, is called judgment, but the work of God in the soul, *sanctification is called judgment*, hence we may observe, what is the most judicious course in the world, the most judicious frame of soul, when it is framed to the judgment and truth of God, being the first truth. When a man is sanctified and set in a holy frame, it is from a sanctified judgment the flesh is subject to the Spirit, here is all in a gracious order, the baser part doth not rule the higher, but the higher part of the soul, a sanctified judgment rules all, because the whole is in right judgment, therefore sanctification is called judgment, and other courses though they be never so fashionable are but madness, and folly, and disorder

in the censure of the scripture, nothing is judgment and true wisdom, but sanctification, and obedience flowing from sanctification. Therefore saith Moses in Deuteronomy, *then shall you be known to be a wise people, when you obey the laws that I have given you*, only that shews a wise judicious man, to be obedient to God's truth, by the Spirit sanctifying him. Without the truth of God, and the Spirit in us, framing our souls answerable to the truth, we are out of all good order. For then the affections that should be ruled, rule us; then the body, and the lusts of the body, rule the soul; and the devil rules by both: what a shameful disorder is this, when a man shall be ruled by the devil and his own lusts that he should tread under feet and trample upon; and this is the state of all that have not this judgment in them, that have not the Word of God written in their hearts, bowing and bending them by the Spirit of God to spiritual obedience; to prove this I will name but one place among many, *Titus* iii. 3, he shews the state of all men, that are not brought into subjection by this judgment, by the Word and Spirit of truth. *We ourselves*, saith he, *were sometimes foolish and disobedient*, till this judgment is set up in us, we are foolish in our understandings, and disobedient in our wills and affections, deceived and misled by the devil, and our own lusts: for that follows upon folly, those that are foolish and disobedient are deceived and led away to eternal destruction, *there is a way that seems good in a man's own eyes, but the issues of it are death*, saith Solomon, this is the state of all men that are not led with the judgment of God's truth and Spirit, sanctifying and framing their souls to obedience, *they are foolish and disobedient and deceived*, and so it will prove with them in the end, *serving di-*

verse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hating one another. Now when God by his blessed truth and Spirit sets up his rule in the heart, it brings all into captivity, as St. Paul saith, it brings all the inner man into subjection. *The word of God is the weapon of God, these judgments are mighty in operation together with the Spirit, to beat down all strong holds and to set up another judgment there, it brings all into captivity to the truth and command of God, and to the motions of the Spirit,* the Word and Spirit beat down all the strong holds that are raised up in the heart by Satan, and our corruptions, so we see here what is meant by this phrase, *he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles.* It is a militant word, therefore I have stood somewhat the longer in unfolding of it.

Now this is wrought by the preaching of the gospel, *He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles,* all grace comes by declaring, *The gospel is the power of God to salvation.* Let but the gospel, which is God's judgment how men shall be saved, and how they shall walk in obedience by way of thankfulness to God, be declared, and all that belong to God shall come in, and yield homage to it, and be brought in subjection. The devil in the *antichristian* state knows this well enough, therefore he labours to hinder the declaration of judgment by all means, he will not have God's judgments but men's traditions declared, he knows the declaring of God's judgments will breed an alteration quickly in men's dispositions: for when he saith, *He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles,* he means the consequent as well as the thing, he shall so declare judgment that they shall yield spiritual obedience and come in and be saved.

Let the devil do his worst, let all seducers of souls

do their worst, if they would but give way to the preaching of the gospel, let but judgment be declared, let God's arm be stretched forth in delivering the truth, he would soon gain souls out of the captivity and bondage of Satan; they know it well enough, therefore by all the ways they can, they stop the preaching of the gospel, and disgrace and hinder it, and set up men's traditions instead of the gospel: but I will not enlarge myself farther upon these words, but go on to the next.

He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

These words set down the mild, and sweet, and amiable manner of Christ's carriage upon earth; here in his first coming to work the great work of our redemption, he did not carry the matter in an outward glorious manner, in pomp, but he would have his miracles concealed ofttimes, and himself hidden, his Godhead was hid under the veil of his manhood, he could not have wrought our salvation else; if the devil and the world had known Christ to be as he was, they would never have made those attempts against him, therefore considering he had such a dispensation to work our salvation, as a king, priest, and prophet, he would not cry, and contend, and strive, he would not come with any great noise.

Now here is an opposition to the giving of the law, and likewise to the coming and carriage of civil princes. You know when the law was given all the mount was on fire, and the earth thereabout quaked and trembled, and the people fled, they could not endure to hear the voice of God speaking in the mount, there was such a terrible smoke and fire, they were all afraid, thus

came Moses: now did Christ come as Moses? was the gospel delivered by Christ as the law was, in terrors and fears? Oh no; Christ came not in such a terrible manner, in thunder and lightning, but the gospel it came sweetly. A dove, a mild creature, lit upon the head of Christ when he was baptized, to shew his mild manner of carriage, and he came with blessing in his mouth in his first sermon of all, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.* The law came with curses, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them.* Christ came in another manner, the gospel was delivered in a mild sweet manner, Christ as an ambassador came sweetly to entreat and beseech, there is a crying indeed, but it is a crying out of love and entreaty, not a shouting in a terrible manner as was at the giving of the law; no, nor as at the coming of other civil princes into a city with shouting and noise of trumpets, with pomp and state, and great attendants. Christ came not into the world to execute his kingdom and office in such pomp and noise, as it is said of Agrippa, Acts xxv. 23, *he came with great pomp*, so worldly princes carry things thus, and it is needful in some sort, people must have shows and pomp, the outward man must have outward things to astonish it withal, it is a policy in state so to do, but Christ came in another manner, he came not to make men quake and tremble that came to speak and deal with him, he came not with clamour and fierceness: for who would have come to Christ then? But he came in a mild, and sweet, and amiable manner; we see a little before the text, upon occasion of the inference of these words, he commands and chargeth

them that they should not discover him and make him known, when he had done a good work he would not have it known.

Now there are three things especially insinuated in this description, *he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the street.* That Christ should not be outwardly glorious to publish his own excellency, nor contentious, he should not cry nor quarrel, nor he should not be clamorous, if he had any wrong, to be all on fire presently, but he should be as a meek lamb, he should make no noise, he should not come in vainglory, or clamour, &c.

But here we must know that Christ was a wise discerner of the fitness of times: for sometimes he would have things published, sometimes he would not, sometimes he would be known, sometimes he would not. Christ in his second coming shall come all in majesty and glory with his angels, and all the earth shall appear before him; but now his wisdom told him, now he came to save the world as a prophet, priest, and king, to work man's salvation, that he must hide and conceal himself, and so he ordered all his courses by discretion; every sacrifice must be salted with salt, every thing should be seasoned with the salt of discretion, this is the steward of all our actions, to know what is fit, Christ knew it was fittest to conceal himself now at this time.

Now by Christ's example we should learn this, not to be vainglorious, not to make a great noise; you have some if they do any thing that is good, presently all the world must know it, this was not Christ's disposition; it is a disposition that is hardly wrought out of man's heart without an exceeding great measure of the Spirit of God: for we see good men have been

given this way. *David would number the people that it might be known what a great monarch he was, what a great number of people he had,* he was a good man, yet vainglorious, he smarted for it. So good Hezekias, ambassadors were sent to him from the king of Babylon, and that they should know that Hezekiah was no beggarly prince, *out must come the vessels of the temple, and all his treasures, to shew what a rich king the king of Judah was.* His vainglory cost him all his riches, as the prophet told him. So the disciples before they received a great measure of the Spirit, how vainglorious were they! They contended for the higher place, therefore they advise Christ to go up to Jerusalem, that he might be known; as Jehu said to Jonadab, *come up and see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,* he accounts it nothing unless it be seen; so flesh and blood, if there be any thing done that is good, all the world must know it presently. Christ chargeth them that no noise should be made, but that they would conceal him.

What should we learn hence?

To be of Christ's disposition, that is, to have no more care of the knowledge of things than the light of the things themselves will discover, to do works of light, and if the things themselves will break forth to men's eyes and *they must see our light shine,* then let them, and imitate our good works, but for us to blazon them abroad ourselves, it is not the Spirit of Christ.

Let us labour to have humility of spirit, that that may grow up with us in all our performances, that all things that we speak and do may savour of a spirit of humility, that we may seek the glory of God in all things more than our own.

And let us commit the fame and credit of what we are or do to God, he will take care of that, let us take care to be and to do as we should, and then for noise and report, let it be good or ill as God will send it: we know ofttimes it falls out that that which is precious in man's eye is abominable in God's, if we seek to be in the mouths of men, to dwell in the talk and speech of men, God will abhor us, and at the hour of death it will not comfort us what men speak or know of us, but sound comfort must be from our own conscience and the judgment of God: therefore let us labour to be good in secret, Christians should be as minerals, rich in the depth of the earth, that which is least seen is his riches, we should have our treasure deep: for the discovery of it, we should be ready when we are called to it, and for all other accidental things, let them fall out as God in his wisdom sees good. So let us look through good report and bad report to heaven, let us do the duties that are pleasing to God and our own conscience, and God will be careful enough to get us applause; was it not sufficient for Abel, that though there was no great notice taken what faith he had, and how good a man he was, yet that God knew it, and discovered it? God sees our sincerity and the truth of our hearts, and the graces of our inward man, he sees all these, and he values us by these, as he did Abel; as for outward things, there may be a great deal of deceit in them, and the more a man grows in grace, the less he cares for them; as much reputation as is fit for a man will follow him in being and doing what he should, God will look to that. Therefore we should not set up sails to our own meditations, that unless we be carried with the wind of applause, to be becalmed and not go

a whit forward, but we should be carried with the Spirit of God and with a holy desire to serve God, and our brethren, and to do all the good we can, and never care for the speeches of the world, as St. Paul saith of himself, *I care not what ye judge of me, I care not what the world judgeth, I care not for man's judgment, this is man's day;* we should from the example of Christ, labour to subdue this infirmity which we are sick of naturally. Christ concealed himself till he saw a fitter time. We shall have glory enough, and be known enough to devils, to angels, and men ere long; therefore, as Christ lived a hidden life, that is, he was not known what he was, that so he might work our salvation, so let us be content to be hidden men. A true Christian is hidden to the world till the time of manifestation comes; when the time came, Christ then gloriously discovered what he was; so we shall be discovered what we are; in the mean time let us be careful to do our duty that may please the Spirit of God, and satisfy our own conscience, and leave all the rest to God; let us meditate, in the fear of God, upon these directions for the guidance of our lives in this particular.

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